ÉCOLE PRATIQUE DES HAUTES ÉTUDES
VI^e SECTION - PARIS

INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL ANTHROPOLOGY - OXFORD

CONTRIBUTIONS TO INDIAN SOCIOLOGY

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No. IV

PARIS MOUTON & CO THE HAGUE

1960

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PRINTED IN FRANCE

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EDITORIAL

A FIRST STEP

As announced in the initial leaflet, the first three numbers of this publication have given the joint position of the editors on some questions directly linked with a general perspective of the speciality, and reviewed with care some important works. From now on, articles will be signed, and we hope that it will be possible to widen to some extent the circle of collaborators as well as the range of ideas or opinions, without losing sight of our initial framework.

It is perhaps the moment to condense what we know of the relation between this publication and its readers. On the whole the reception has been favourable, and *Contributions*, notwithstanding the imperfections of its distribution, has found a public. The general note, in correspondence as well as in reviews, is one of consideration, from warm encouragement to detailed discussion. A significant note is struck in a letter from an anthropologist who wrote after No. 1: "... a stimulating journal. I feel you have done a real service ... by clearly taking a stand and giving us a position to agree with or differ from. I do differ ... but I should like to reserve comment to a later date ..."

The attempt being ambitious, and the means of its realization limited, particularly as the burden of it was assumed by the two editors alone, the contrast was likely to make them appear pretentious as soon as they seemed to depart from common knowledge or to criticize excessively. It seems that our intentions have not been misunderstood, except by Dr. Bailey, who represents an extreme case.[1]

[1] Cf. the scholarly review by J. T. Hitchcock in *Journal of Asian Studies*, XVII, 1957-1958, p. 649-650.

Certainly the initial statement was too concentrated, and too far removed from the language to which most anthropologists are accustomed to be easily understandable by those who were not very familiar with the subject matter. We hope that the subsequent developments may have partly cleared up some of its obscurities. Some readers have expressed discontent at the formula of joint responsibility. We have found it useful, although it entailed additional work, because it obliged us to eschew views which, being too personal, could not find the agreement of the other editor, and to work on a kind of basic level, with the feeling of going some way to meet our colleagues' agreement and to build a point of view as impersonally as possible. Now that some sort of a framework has been set up, and that articles by others are introduced, we take the opportunity of releasing the pressure by signing individually, but we shall occasionally use the joint formula as before.

* * *

Among the reactions which may be commented upon, one represents a danger of misunderstanding on the part of the Indian fraction of our readers. Professor Hutton foresaw it: "The attitude which they [the editors] adopt will probably commend itself to many Indians in that it lays emphasis, one might say excessive emphasis, on the unity of Indian culture" (review in *Man*, 1958, No. 229). So it is that the warm agreement of a very learned Indian scholar, while being very heartening indeed, did at the same time by some of its details make us feel slightly uncomfortable.

It is a very little thing in this case, but what about less eminent and balanced readers? Have not some of our Indian readers found in the affirmation of the basic unity of Indian caste society more than a sociological proposition, something of the kind of a political affirmation, not to say a weapon? We alluded to a situation of the kind (I, 9). To clear up all misapprehension it should suffice to recall that the unity to which we have referred not only is not political unity, but is so construed that it excludes, or makes impossible, political unity. In terms of the "ends of action" *artha* is made subservient to *dharma* (see p. 41 below), this means here political disunity for the sake of religious supremacy. And the course of Indian history as a whole confirms this. Seen from this angle, the task of modern Indian statesmen is precisely to replace

one sort of unity by the other. From a caste society to a nation the way is long, and the political task will look the more arduous, the more the nature of the existing unity is understood. Our Indian friends will forgive us, if, prompted by the desire to avoid a confusion of levels, we have here somewhat overstepped our usual bounds.

It goes without saying that we did not expect everybody to agree on the main issues we raised, even as to their broad content as distinct from their particular formulation. In the first place we wanted to provide a ferment, or a catalyzing agent. It is too early to know, but there is some slight evidence that the ferment is working. We were concerned with making a number of points which, to our mind, made some sense not only in themselves, but still more when taken in their relatedness. Of these, mainly two were likely to arouse, and have in fact aroused, contradiction.[2] One is about the place of the territorial factor, (see below p. 88), the other is about the oneness of traditional Indian society. Professor Hutton thinks that the criteria are too wide and would cover other countries as well: the "argument, that the traditional sanskritic civilization of Hinduism demonstrates the unity of India, might be used to extend the boundaries of that unity to include a great deal more of Asia and its islands than can possibly be labelled Indian" *(ibid.)*.

We can reply in the first place that to extend the boundaries, if such was the case, would do no harm. The fact that the French language is used from Dunkerque to Perpignan is in no way cancelled by the fact that it is used also in Mauritius and Haiti. We are not concerned with the mapping of phenomena, we are concerned with what happens within India, in relation with methods of study and comparison within and without India. Moreover, if Burma and Indonesia had a social system similar to that of India, there would even be no objection in extending the same methods to them.

But we have just introduced a social criterion, while the above quotation refers to a cultural one. Actually the cultural argument is scarcely ours: we took it over from Indology immediately to point out that unity is not absent either from the lower, non-classical level of civilization. There is a progress in the passage (I, 9-10), from what is commonly admitted or discussed—cultural unity—to our position—social unity—. When Professor Hutton goes on

[2] There has been little defence of the Aryan-Dravidian dichotomy, although the attack was not developed.

to say that "it can be argued with at least equal reason that the diversity of language, custom and tradition within India herself demonstrates the undoubted fact that the culture of India of to-day derives from multiple sources", this will be easily granted, in so far as it is a matter of linguistic and cultural diversity, and, more hypothetically, of genesis. But it does not in any way exclude social unity and structural identity, structural understanding and genetical explanation being two different things. We hope that subsequent discussions have shown some of the advantages of our initial postulate as compared to the opposite one. The question is, at one point, more precisely posited by Dr. Bailey: there may be something excessive in arguing from the sociological unity of India to the existence of something like (traditional) Indian *society* as a whole. Perhaps another word than society, say, a "sociological whole", or a "societal whole" should better be employed. This would allow those who wish to define their "society" in each case on the basis of interaction (as for instance Dr. Bailey wants to do) to do so without losing sight of what in our view is fundamental. What the "whole" we recognize is called is secondary, provided its sociological nature is admitted.

Let us add here only very simple remarks. On the question, whether there is one social system in the India of caste, or several, or an indefinite number of them, we have simply given the most simple and straightforward expression for a situation to which the literature testifies. The works we have reviewed so far should suffice to illustrate the situation, as well as the complications involved for those who have made a different postulate. One might even say that every one commonly argues as if he agreed with us. To speak of a "caste" or of the "dominant caste" is to speak on a pan-indian level, and these are no doubt useful expressions. That there are regional variants, even in social organisation, is certain, but it is more than likely that, being such, they cannot be properly distinguished except by reference to a common model, the more so as they are generally studied by different persons. That the expressions "caste" or "dominant caste" have no meaning, or have not the same meaning, outside India we do believe, but even this is irrelevant to the methodological problems of Indian studies. This being so, it might even be said that the burden of proof is with our contradictors: if they use such expressions as the above, then why do they not avail themselves straightforwardly of the

advantages involved, why do they not draw the full consequences? This looks a little like a scholastic dispute. Probably some are afraid of being led unto a view of society which would be too abstract, too ideological. But we are there to draw the full consequences of the facts, whatever our preferences, our "interests" as Dr. Bailey would say, might be. Here lies the difference between science and scienticism.

* * *

As we said at the beginning, *Contributions* is entering into a second stage, in a slightly expanded formula. Again three numbers are planned (the summary of the next one is given below), and we are thankful to our colleagues who have provided articles which bear on central themes of our study. Later on, apart from our own effort, the future of the publication will depend largely upon the attitude of others. It is strange that Dr. Bailey could take this publication to be a "forum", we thought it was clear that we had chosen a much more restricted, if not an easier, formula. While doing so we were of course aware that this choice was likely to entail a shorter life, and Dr. Bailey can be reassured: there is nothing frightening in the editors being left "alone in their forum" (III, 88), which has never been one. But of course it would be a greater measure of success if a conversation could develop around the themes we have thought necessary to provide, and other themes which might be introduced in course of time. The ideal would be if some part of the elaboration which normally takes place within every one's mind could find its place in these pages, at the level of communication. We shall have done what we could in order to provide a basis for this, and no development is ruled out.

Contributions No. V will contain:

F. G. Bailey: Tribe and Caste.
D. F. Pocock: Psychological Approaches.
L. Dumont: Marriage, the Present State of the Question.

CASTE IN THE MULTI-ETHNIC SOCIETY OF NEPAL

by Christoph von FÜRER-HAIMENDORF

It is eminently fitting that the following should be the first contribution by a guest-writer to appear in these pages. This is not only because of the personality of the author, but still more so because of the subject. To sum up in a few pages, on the basis of new material, what may provisionally be called the Nepalese variant of the caste system is certainly a bold attempt, given the complexity of the subject. It is of particular interest from the point of view which has been taken here, and we hope to be able to comment on it later. For the moment we welcome and thank our distinguished colleague. ED.

In an article on "The Inter-relations of Castes and Ethnic Groups in Nepal",[1] I discussed the differences between the principles underlying the interaction of social groups in the multi-ethnic society of Nepal, and those determining the operation of caste societies in India. The data on which this discussion was based had been collected in the course of a preliminary ethnographic survey of parts of Central and Eastern Nepal carried out in the second half of 1953. Since then I have spent another year in Nepal,[2] and the observations made among tribal as well as caste societies permit an amplification and necessitate certain corrections of the views expressed in the above article.

Before we enter upon a discussion of the inter-relations between the various linguistically, racially and culturally disparate sections of the population of Nepal, we must consider the problem whether

[1] *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, 1957, Vol. 20, p. 243-253.

[2] Fieldwork carried out between March 1957 and March 1958 was substantially assisted by a generous grant from the Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research.

the many distinct castes and tribal communities dwelling within the frontiers of the kingdom of Nepal can be legitimately regarded as one "society" and a practicable unit for an anthropological study. In its present shape Nepal contains populations belonging to two major cultural spheres, the Indian and the Tibetan, as well as a large number of tribal groups which are not definitely aligned with either. In the Kathmandu Valley, the cultural and political heart of the country, to which the people of the hills often refer simply as "Nepal", populations of Aryan speech and Indid race have long been interacting with Tibeto-Burman speaking, Mongoloid populations. It would be impossible to divide the population of this Valley along ethnic or religious lines, and even linguistic groups interact with each other on so many levels that we cannot view the inhabitants of the Valley other than as a single society of great structural complexity. A population pattern made up of the same or similar elements is found also in other parts of Nepal, notably in such urban centres as Gurkha, Pokhara, or Dhankuta. The position is different, however, in some outlying areas where more or less homogeneous populations live in comparative isolation. Viewed from the angle of the region of their maximal concentration such populations appear to constitute distinct societies maintaining no more than trade connections with the inhabitants of neighbouring parts of the country. But the acceptance of individual members of these populations within the multi-ethnic society of the Nepal Valley would seem to justify the inclusion of outlying tribes within the general framework of Nepalese society.

When we speak of such an All-Nepal society, we must realize, however, that the basis of its unity is slender. Its constituent parts retain each their own specific values and customs, and share only in the recognition of a limited number of unifying factors. One of these is the acceptance of a political system personified by the King and centred in the Nepal Valley, and another is the use of the Nepali language as the common medium of inter-ethnic communications. It is used not only by the speakers of tribal tongues in conversing with such Nepali speakers as Brahmans or Chetris, but serves as a *lingua franca* even for the intercourse between members of two different tribal groups, say Sherpas and Rais, or Gurungs and Magars.

Visible expressions of a certain cultural unity throughout the greater part of Nepal are found in the sphere of dress. Barring

those frontier tribes which follow Tibetan styles of dress, there is among the men of most ethnic groups the tendency to conform in their more formal attire to fashions originating from the Nepal Valley. The peaked, unsymmetrical cap, the close-fitting cotton trousers and a crossed-over garment of distinctive cut are worn by men of all communities who can afford them. Thus Nepalese of whatever caste, travelling outside the frontiers of their country, can usually be recognized by their dress, and there is no doubt that such outward uniformity creates a superficial sense of cultural unity. More important, however, than these visible expressions of group-existence is the Nepalese people's awareness of belonging to the same political unit and of being subject to the same laws. This feeling is strong even among such frontier people as the Sherpas, who though entirely Tibetan in race and culture evince a pride in being Nepalese citizens and acknowledge the advantages of Nepalese rule compared to Tibetan rule.

While this "national" feeling no less than the use of Nepali as the *lingua franca* and the conformity to a preferred pattern of dress dates presumably only from the time since the Gurkha conquest, when the new rulers of Thakuri and Chetri caste extended their domination as far as Kumaon in the West and the frontiers of Sikkim in the East, the growth of a multi-ethnic caste society must have begun many centuries earlier. Its first location was no doubt the Nepal Valley, where communities of different origin were drawn into economic, social and ultimately also ritual interaction long before the days of Thakuri and Chetri rule.

Both the caste system of Nepal and the caste system of India have their roots in the Hindu concept of a hierarchic order based on varying degrees of ritual purity. In so far as the system of Nepal coincides with its Indian counterpart it is interesting merely as an additional illustration of a well-known pattern. Its importance to the student of Asian societies lies in the considerable—and in certain respects fundamental—divergences from the present Indian system. Nepal, a country where Hindu society has never been exposed to the modifying influence of Muslim or European rule, has developed a stratified, multi-ethnic society of a distinctive type, which lacks certain features hitherto believed inseparable from the Hindu caste system, and evinces a remarkable capacity of absorbing and digesting disparate elements.

Its present configuration is understandable only in the light of

the history of the Nepal Valley which for nearly two thousand years has been a meeting place of different races and civilizations. The main population of this Valley is formed by the Newars, a people of Tibeto-Burman language, responsible for its great city civilization and the development of an architecture ranking among the finest of Asia. We do not know whether the numerous Buddhist monasteries, which existed in the city of Patan a thousand years ago, were solely or even mainly inhabited by Newar monks, but judging from the situation in later times, there is no doubt that Newars formed the bulk of the Valley's Buddhist population. But when the great centres of Buddhist learning in India fell to the onslaught of Muslim armies, the Buddhist communities in Nepal were cut off from their traditional sources of inspiration, and Hinduism, which appears to have always had a foothold among the lay population, gradually replaced Buddhist attitudes and ways of life. Local tradition ascribes the transformation of a casteless Buddhist society into a society of hierarchically graded castes to the activities of Brahman scholars. These, it is believed, divided the Newar population into 64 occupational castes at the request of the King Jaya Shtiti Malla (1382-1395 A.D.). While it is unlikely that such a change was brought about suddenly and by legislation, the tradition may well reflect a process of social change set in motion by the influence of Indian scholars and priests attached to the Newar court.

Whereas from the earliest times individual Indians have settled in Nepal and historical documents tell of Indian ascetics and scholars who went there to spread the Buddhist doctrine, the large scale immigration of Indian populations dates only from the time of the Muslim conquest of Northern India. At that period Brahmans and other high-caste Hindus sought refuge in Nepal in large numbers, and their presence among the indigenous people of Tibeto-Burman speech resulted in the complex multi-ethnic society of present-day Nepal.

It is doubtful whether as long as Newar kings ruled over the Nepal Valley, the claim of the descendants of Rajputs and other high-caste Indians to superiority of status was generally admitted. But with the victory of the Thakuri dynasty over the Newar kings of the Valley, the claim of Thakuris and Chetris to a ritual status higher than that of any Newar has been bolstered up by political dominance, and today the Newars as an ethnic group occupy at

best a medium rank in the overall caste system of Nepal, quite irrespective of any individual Newar's position within the internal hierarchy of the Newar community.

In attempting a description of the overall caste system of Nepal we are faced by the necessity of choosing a point from which to view it. The system appears different from the perspective of the Upadiya Brahman and from that of the Newar of high status. The former is inclined to see the system in the shape of a single pyramid with his own caste at the top and all others occupying definite layers further down. The Newar, on the other hand, thinks of the Nepali speaking castes such as Upadiya Brahmans, Thakuris and Chetris and of the Newar hierarchy of castes as forming separate and roughly parallel structures.

The point of view of the Upadiya Brahmans, which coincides to a great extent with that of their Thakuri and Chetri clients, is reflected in the legal code which has been in force during the past two centuries of Thakuri rule. This code protects the interest of the Brahmans and other "twice-born" castes by making any infringement of their exalted status a criminal offence. The seduction of the wife of a Brahman or even of an unmarried Brahman girl by a member of a lower caste, for instance, is punished by severe penalties, while the virtue of women of lower caste is no concern of the law.

The highest place in the caste-hierarchy is occupied by the Upadiya or Purbe Brahmans of Central and Eastern Nepal, and the Kumai Brahmans of Western Nepal. These two castes are not strictly localized, and Kumai Brahmans occur also in the Nepal Valley. Each of them is nominally endogamous and claims a status higher than that of the other. But in practice marriages between these two Brahman castes do take place, and there is no other discrimination against a bride of different Brahman caste than the rule that she may not cook in the kitchen of her parents-in-law, and that the latter do not accept ritually relevant food in her house.

Considerably inferior in status to Upadiya and Kumai Brahmans is the caste of Jaisi Brahmans. These are the issue of unions between Brahmans of either of the two higher castes and Brahman widows. While new Jaisi lineages may come into existence at any time, most Jaisi Brahmans trace their descent through a long line of Jaisi forefathers while the original remarried widow-ancestress may long have been forgotten. Jaisi Brahmans do not act as

priests, and employ themselves Upadiya or Kumai *purohit*. Their clans and *gotra*, however, are the same as those of the higher Brahman castes, from whom all Jaisis must ultimately have been descended.

Though endogamy is the ideal of all Brahman castes, unions sanctified by Vedic rites can be concluded also between Brahman men and girls of Thakuri or Chetri caste. Inter-marriages of this type are legal and do not meet with any social disapproval. The children belong to the father's clan, but are not considered Brahmans. In the case of Brahman-Thakuri unions they are known as Hamal, and in that of Brahman-Chetri unions as Khatri. While the number of Hamals is not large, there are very many Khatri lineages all of which bear Brahman clan names.

Besides ritually impeccable marriages between Brahman men and Thakuri or Chetri girls, there occur also unions of Brahman men with girls of Newar, Gurung, Magar or Tamang parentage. Such unions cannot be sanctified by Vedic ritual, and the husbands retain their caste-status only if they refrain from eating boiled rice and certain other types of food cooked by their wives. Though not greatly favoured by public opinion, such a marriage does not subject a man to any positive sanction on the part of the Brahman community, and the children, regarded as Khatri, bear the father's clan-name. Khatris of this type rank below Khatris who are the issue of a Brahman-Chetri union, but as time passes the origin of a Khatri lineage is likely to be forgotten, and the descendants of a Newar, Gurung or Tamang ancestress may ultimately be accepted as the equals of Khatris of Brahman-Chetri ancestry.

The very large number of Khatri lineages is evidence of a common disregard for the rule of endogamy by the Nepal Brahmans, just as the equally large number of Jaisi Brahmans proves the Brahmans' tendency to widow remarriage. Earlier writers have suggested that the Brahmans entering Nepal as refugees at the time of the Muslim invasions of India had no other choice than to intermarry with local women. But not only is there no reason to assume that high-caste Hindus fled to Nepal leaving their womenfolk behind, this explanation also fails to account for the continuance of inter-caste unions at a time when the large number of Brahmans in Nepal removes any need for the expedient of inter-caste unions. The question must be posed differently. We must investigate why it is that the Brahmans of Nepal, though occupying a rank and ful-

filling priestly functions identical to those of their Indian counterparts, follow in many respects a pattern of behaviour opposed to brahmanic and indeed high caste Hindu ideals as we know them from India. For Nepal Brahmans have not only provided a recognized and by no means unenviable position for remarried widows and their offspring, but they even countenance divorce and the subsequent unions of divorced women with second husbands.[3]

The reason for this attitude would seem to be partly economic and partly environmental. Unlike the majority of Indian Brahmans the Brahmans of Nepal are not in a privileged economic position. Of the original immigrants only a few found congenial employment at the royal court or as temple priests. The majority settled in villages and made their living by tilling the soil. The menial castes, which in India had worked for the priestly caste, had not joined the exodus to Nepal, and in their absence Brahmans had to perform many of the tasks which in their homeland had fallen to lower castes. In the course of time they became peasants, and often lived in compact communities consisting entirely of Brahmans except for an odd blacksmith, shoemaker or tailor. Though retaining their claim to the highest rank in the caste-hierarchy, Brahman peasants live in much the same style as other cultivators, and this similarity extends even to their diet, most Nepal Brahmans being meat eaters. The assimilation of a non-Brahman wife to the ways of a Brahman household is hence far easier than it would be under Indian conditions, and marital unions with women of other groups of peasant-status are viewed with tolerance.

Less easy to diagnose and more subtle is the influence of the cultural environment to which the Nepal Brahmans have been exposed. Considering the determination and pride with which, despite adverse economic conditions, they have kept intact brahmanic ritual, one might hesitate to assume that in their attitude to marriage—a sphere of life surrounded by ritual observances and interdictions—they should have been influenced by the example of indigenous populations. Yet we cannot overlook the fact that the comparatively lenient attitude of Nepal Brahmans and other high caste Hindus towards such matters as inter-caste unions, divorce, and remarriage of divorcées and widows, seems to conform to a moral climate prevalent among most of the Tibeto-Burman

[3] Cf. "The Interrelations of Castes . . .", *loc. cit.*, p. 249.

speaking populations, from the Newars, who have always countenanced divorce and widow-remarriage, to the polyandrous Bhotias and Sherpas, whose concept of marriage diverges altogether from that of orthodox Hindu belief and practice. One might argue that, in India too, Brahmans are in touch with castes whose marital arrangements do not conform to high caste ideals. But there is yet a difference. In India such castes are usually more or less looked down upon, and they themselves acknowledge the superiority of the brahmanic ideal. The indigenous populations of Nepal, on the other hand, were powerful and self-confident when Brahmans and other high-caste Hindus entered the country as political refugees. If physical features are admissible as evidence of origin, there can be no doubt, for instance, that even the Thakuris, whose predominantly Mongoloid features suggest racial affinities with Gurungs and Magars, represent an autochthonous rather than an immigrant ruling class. And though Thakuris, who now rank immediately below Brahmans and above Chetris, have come to accept many high caste Hindu ideals, in their attitude to marriage there remains a residue of that typically Nepalese tolerance of inter-caste and irregular unions which seems to colour the outlook of all communities including Brahmans and Chetris.

By abandoning the ideal of caste endogamy and sanctifying Brahman-Thakuri and Brahman-Chetri unions, the Brahmans of Nepal have given the signal for a general deviation from orthodox Hindu practices. Chetris, no doubt, felt that there was no need to be more brahmanic than the Brahmans. While Brahmans recognized the offspring of unions between Brahman men and women of inferior castes as Khatris and as entitled to the wearing of the sacred thread, Chetris adopted the practice of recognizing the children of any Chetri man as caste members irrespective of the mother's caste provided she was not an untouchable.

Thakuris rank above Chetris, but they too countenance inter-caste marriage, and during the past century inter-marriage between the royal house of Gurkha and the Rana family, which is a lineage of the Chetri clan of Kunwar, has become an accepted practice. Rana girls were the preferred consorts of the royal princes and many royal princesses married Rana husbands. Thus hypergamous as well as hypogamous unions were concluded between the two houses, and the children followed in either case the father's caste and clan.

For the study of the development of a caste under conditions when the rule of caste endogamy is in abeyance the large Chetri caste provides an illuminating example. Thanks to their political power built up during a century of Rana rule and the fact that in certain areas at least they constitute a large proportion of the population, Chetris show many of the characteristics of a dominant caste. But unlike most Indian dominant castes the Chetri community is free from the tendency to split into subdivisions of disparate rank. The named clans *(thar)* into which the community is divided are all of equal status, though historical accident has given political prominence to individual lineages such as the Rana lineage of the Kunwar clan. Yet even at the time of Rana rule the Kunwar clan as a whole was not deemed superior to other Chetri clans.

This does not mean, however, that status differences within the Chetri community do not exist. There is, quite to the contrary, a significant sliding scale of social status, but the units moving up and down this scale are primary and extended families rather than larger descent groups identifiable by name or regional association.

The growth of status-distinctions is closely connected with the tolerance of marital unions of Chetris with members of other, and particularly of lower castes. It is through such unions that differentiations in rank and ritual standing have been introduced into a society composed of inherently equal segments. Whereas the issue from a hypergamous union between a Chetri girl and a Brahman equals in status the purest of Chetris, the children of a Chetri father and a Newar, Gurung, Magar or Tamang mother, though still regarded as Chetris and entitled to their father's clan-name, are denied the privilege of commensality by the members of their father's kin-group. Thus members of distinct status occur within individual clans and lineages, but the unorthodox parentage of one lineage-member does not affect his pure-bred paternal kinsmen as long as they refrain from accepting ritually relevant food at his hand. But even this system shows a considerable elasticity. With the passage of time, the descendants of inter-caste unions are able to work their way back into the circle of fully privileged lineage-members, and the most favoured means of such social "climbing" is a marriage with a girl of superior status. Though involving persons of the same "caste", both groom and bride being Chetris, such marriages have nevertheless the character of hypogamous unions.

Status-differentiations, however, are not marked by hard and fast lines comparable to those dividing Indian sub-castes. A drop in status below that of the "pure" Chetri is a matter of degree. Not only the offspring of an inter-caste union will be excluded from commensality, but a similar discrimination may operate against the children of a Chetri man and a Chetri divorcée or widow. The underprivileged ritual position of such persons is regarded as an unfortunate deviation from a Chetri's normal position rather than as a lower grade in a definite ranking system. There is no general Nepali term to describe such a lowered status. While a person of impeccable status is referred to as *jharra*, those lacking such status are simply known as not being *jharra*, irrespective of the cause of their disqualification.

Jharra status does not necessarily coincide with high economic status. Among the Chetris of the Nepal Valley, where I collected most of my quantitative data, there are many families of wealth and political influence which are not considered *jharra*, whereas the majority of the poorer peasants pride themselves on their *jharra* status. Non-*jharra* families of means often succeed in finding for their sons brides of *jharra* status, and it is by such alliances—hypogamous from a ritual though not from an economic point of view—that over the generations a family can gradually raise its ritual and social status. Though it is not definitely laid down that a woman's superior status should be passed on to her children, in practice alliances with *jharra* women greatly strengthen a family's chances of readmittance to commensality with their *jharra* patri-kin.

The Chetris' tolerant attitude to marital unions with Newar girls as well as with women of such tribes as Gurungs, Magars, and Tamangs, has led to the formation of a caste of a very great range and complexity. Within one and the same Chetri clan one can find individuals of widely differing ancestry in the female line. While among peasant- and middle-class families status differences resulting from miscegenation and irregular unions concern as a rule only a narrow circle of kinsmen, they were systematized and became a matter of public interest among the nobility and particularly among the Ranas. A classification of the members of that lineage into A class, B class and C class Ranas—first introduced in that form by foreign observers, but readily and widely adopted by the Nepalese—is such a systematization of status distinctions within a lineage. A class Ranas were the offspring of *jharra* Ranas legally

married to *jharra* girls of any Chetri clan. B class Ranas were the product of a Rana's union with a Chetri widow or divorcée, and C class Ranas were the children of Rana men and women of lower caste, such as Newars, Tamangs or Sherpas. Only A class Ranas were in the line of succession to the hereditary prime ministership, and, to restrict the number of such aspirants to the highest office even further, a rule was introduced in later years, according to which only the sons of A class Ranas from wives belonging to the royal Thakuri clan of Saha should be placed on the roll of succession.

As most Ranas had besides their legal Chetri or Thakuri spouses several subsidiary wives recruited from such communities as Newars, Gurungs, Magars, Tamangs and Sherpas, the number of C class Ranas is very great and among them is represented the blood of nearly every ethnic group of Nepal, with the exception of untouchable castes. Yet, Ranas of A, B and C class all count as members of a single lineage, and thus present an example of a lineage with a considerable sense of corporateness extending over several strata of a hierarchic order. The corporateness of the lineage is expressed in its name borne by all members, in the worship of a common *kul devata* or lineage deity, and the observance of pollution by members of the lineage at the death of any Rana of whatever class.

Ranas of Cclass share the ritual status of other offspring of Chetri men and women of lower caste, but until the last phase of Rana rule they identified themselves with the politically powerful Aclass leaders of the Rana lineage, and not with the amorphous mass of non-*jharra* Chetris, a class which, unlike an Indian subcaste, has no sense of corporateness and identity of interests. For the individual offspring of a Chetri and a Newar or other non-Chetri mother has the ambition to be recognized as kin by his father's *jharra* relatives, and neither identifies himself nor wishes to be identified by others with people of similar mixed parentage. Had Chetris with Newar mothers tended to marry again girls with Newar blood, a Chetri-Newar subcaste might have emerged. But no such development is noticeable, and Chetris born of Newar, Gurung or Magar mothers make every effort to marry girls of pure Chetri parentage. Those who are wealthy or wield political influence usually succeed in this attempt, and many C class Ranas have married Thakuri or Chetri girls of impeccable parentage.

The reaction of Chetri society to contact and miscegenation with

foreign elements is thus basically different from that of most Indian castes. The latter tend to preserve a pure core by allocating the offspring of all irregular unions to subcastes of lower status, whereas Chetri society does not favour fissiparous tendencies, but shows a considerable absorptive power resulting in a continuous assimilation of foreign elements. Such foreign elements are brought into Chetri society exclusively through the mechanism of hypergamous unions, i.e. by Chetri men taking Newar, Gurung or Tamang wives. No social recognition on the part of the Chetri community is given to a union involving a Chetri girl and Newar or other lower caste man. Such a union results in the rupture of all ties between the girl and her natal family, and her children have no status in Chetri society.

The solidarity of Chetris on all economic levels and irrespective of the fluctuating ritual status of individual families is all the more remarkable in view of the community's wide geographic spread throughout the whole length of Nepal from the border of Kumaon to that of Sikkim. Though Hindu to the core in so far as religious convictions are concerned, the Chetris resisted the tendency to a division into sub-castes so characteristic of the Hindu system of society in India, and preserved thereby an almost tribal feeling of homogeneity and solidarity.

We know as yet too little of the social history of Nepal, to explain this striking difference between the Chetris and comparable twice-born castes in India with any sense of assurance. On the basis of the limited available data I would venture, however, the hypothesis that the Chetris' tolerance of inter-caste unions and acceptance of their offspring within the compass of the caste may be due to their position as a minority among many other ethnic groups. As such it was and is in their interest to resist fissiparous tendencies, and to maintain a common front vis-à-vis other communities even if strength in numbers has to be bought at the price of watering down the purity of their Chetri blood. By retaining the offspring of mixed marriages as members of the undivided caste and their father's clans, the Chetris secured the loyalty of these "half-Chetris", whereas their segregation in a caste of lower status might have resulted in alignment with such indigenous ethnic groups as Newars, Gurungs or Magars. When the Ranas, in the last phase of their rule, over-confident of their power, discriminated against the sons of non-Chetri mothers not only ritually but also politically, this is exactly what happened, and C class Ranas played an impor-

tant rôle in the overthrow of Rana rule. Indian castes comparable in status to the Chetris are in most areas more sure of their dominant position, and can thus afford to weaken their numerical strength by relegating persons of mixed blood to inferior subcastes. For they stand near the top of a pyramid made up of groups all recognizing the hierarchy of castes, whereas the attitude of the non-Hindu populations of Nepal to the Chetri community, not predetermined by such considerations, depended on the Chetris' solidarity, numerical strength and political power.

The Newars are in a rather different position. In the Nepal Valley they have always constituted the majority of the population, and until the Gurkha conquest even the overwhelming majority. In the hills, on the other hand, they are everywhere in a minority, but without the Chetris' aspirations to a politically leading position. The sense of cohesion and solidarity which inspires the Newar people springs thus from different roots and is not comparable to the feeling of unity within the Chetri community. Vis-à-vis the other ethnic groups and particularly the now dominant castes of Parbatia Brahmans, Thakuris and Chetris, the Newars feel united as heirs to a distinct civilization and speakers of a separate language.

But when looking inwards they see their society divided into castes and local groups, constituting an elaborate hierarchy, complicated by the division of the community into a Buddhist and a Hindu section. As I have described this twofold hierarchy in considerable detail in my article "Elements of Newar Social Structure".[4] I shall refer here only to the features most relevant to a general appraisal of the Nepalese caste system. The Newar hierarchy of castes is a replica of an Indian caste system, and to my knowledge the Newars are the only Tibeto-Burman speaking people organized in this manner. At the top of the hierarchy there are the priestly castes of Gubhajus and Bares in the Buddhist sector, and of Deo Brahmans and Jha Brahmans in the Hindu sector. Next to them ranks the land-owning caste-group of Sheshyo (or Shresta), itself subdivided into several strata and extending to both sectors. Below Sheshyos stand the agricultural Jyapus, a number of artisan castes, and at the bottom of the scale the untouchable butchers and sweepers.

Ideally all Newar castes are endogamous, but in practice inter-

[4] *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, Vol. 82, 1956, p. 15-38.

caste and even inter-ethnic unions are tolerated. The attitude to the children from inter-caste unions depends on the status of the two castes concerned. Intermarriage between the two priestly castes of Gubhaju and Bare is permissible both in a hypergamous and a hypogamous form, and in either case the children inherit the ritual status of their father.

The large caste-group of Sheshyos is internally subdivided into three strata of distinct status, and a good deal of social climbing is practised by wealthy men who marry girls of the next higher grade, and whose children succeed in claiming their mother's status. This practice constitutes a parallel to the Chetri device of regaining *jharra* status by a series of socially advantageous alliances. But in the case of the Newars even major caste boundaries may occasionally be crossed by the practice of hypogamous unions. Thus there are instances of wealthy Jyapus who married poor Sheshyo girls and gained for their children recognition as Sheshyos.

Judging from such instances, however isolated, and from the social climbing of Chetris, it would appear that the approach to social advancement in Nepal is fundamentally different from that adopted in most Indian caste societies. There a person can rise in ritual status only by emulating the conduct of higher castes and —most important—by inducing a few intermarrying families to make the same effort. Such a group of families can then form the nucleus of a new endogamous subcaste of superior status. We have seen that neither Chetris nor Newars adopt this procedure. In Nepal the individual can follow a solitary path of social advancement by means of favourable marital unions.

A Newar retains his caste status even though living in a permanent sexual union and a common household with a woman of considerably lower caste provided he does not eat ritually relevant food cooked by her. Even the children from such a union may inherit the father's status if only they observe the same precaution and do not eat from their mother's hand once they have outgrown childhood.

There is altogether greater rigidity in the matter of commensality than in that of sexual congress. Newars, no less than Brahmans and Chetris, are extremely pollution-conscious, and are strict in the observance of the rules of interdining. While the acceptance of such basic food as boiled rice is permissible only from the hands of

persons of at least equal status, sexual relations may be carried on with women of lower status without detriment to a man's own status. Sexual congress then is a neutral action in so far as caste purity is concerned, while interdining is of supreme ritual relevance.

In the compact Newar society of the Nepal Valley, the incidental unions with women of lower status had only the effect of an occasional small admixture of non-Newar blood, such as of Tibetan blood in the case of the Urhä caste.[5] But as soon as Newars leave the Nepal Valley, and the larger urban Newar colonies in other areas, and settle in small groups among the people of the hills, unions with local women create very different problems. Newars are here no longer in a position to absorb foreign elements into their society and cultural atmosphere, but they stand in danger of being absorbed themselves. In many parts of Eastern Nepal one finds Newars who no longer consider themselves as members of *one* of the Newar castes of the Valley, but simply as Newar. They have lost the knowledge of Newari, speak Nepali as their mother-tongue and have given up observing many of the specifically Newari customs and rituals, such as for instance the worship of their *digu deo* or clan-god, and the *ihi* rite, the marriage of small girls to a *bel* fruit. Many such Newars have no doubt a mixed ancestry, being the descendants of Newar men and tribal women. In areas where Newars have still some contact with the Nepal Valley the issue of such unions are known as Nagarkoti or Lowat, whereas all other Newars consider themselves rightly or wrongly as Shrestas. There is, as a rule, no strong feeling against the intermarriage of Shrestas and Lowats, and when the issue from such unions marry Shrestas again their children count as Shrestas. "It takes", as one informant told me, "more than one generation to become Shresta again after the admixture of non-Newar blood". In other words those of mixed blood who are 1/2 or 1/4 non-Newar are known as Lowat, while those of only 1/8 non-Newar blood count as Shrestas. This principle, though not universally recognized, is of interest as an attitude to inter-caste and inter-ethnic marriages, but as the distance from the Nepal Valley increases, Newars become even less conscious of matters of caste purity, and there are areas where Hill Newars, whether of pure or mixed extraction, form an undifferentiated community comparable, on the one hand, to such tribal groups

[5] Cf. "Elements of Newar Social Structure", *loc. cit.*, p. 20.

as Gurungs or Tamangs, and on the other to the monolithic caste of Chetris. But whereas Chetris, wherever they may be found, are well aware of their clan affiliations, Newars in the diaspora tend to lose any consciousness not only of their original caste but even of the clan names their ancestors must have had. The loss of their Newari language stands in a curious contrast to the spread of Nepali in the wake of Chetri and Brahman expansion. While the latter carried their language with them when infiltrating into remote areas, such as for instance the valley of the Arun, and thereby assisted its growth as the *lingua franca* of Nepal, the Newars evinced little tenacity in retaining their own tongue. Indeed Newari, though a literary language of great antiquity, and the language of the highest civilization Nepal has ever produced, never gained wide currency outside the Nepal Valley.

Only some small, compact Newar communities in certain trading centres (e.g. those in Ramechap district) have retained their Newari language together with their connections with the Newars of the Valley, their caste affiliations and their specific Newar customs. They do not intermarry with the local Hill Newars, and remain outposts of the Newar society of the Valley, whereas the Nepali speaking Hill Newars are part of the local multi-ethnic society.

To the Hill Newars, who live in exactly the same rustic style as their tribal neighbours, it is a matter of indifference to which caste their ancestors had belonged when five or six generations ago they left the Valley. If pressed to tell their caste name they usually describe themselves as Shrestas, knowing that this is a respectable caste, but to their neighbours they are simply Newars, whose status is unaffected by any past link with either higher or lower strata of Newar society in Kathmandu or Patan.

We have seen that in the society in the Valley, be it that of the Newars or that of Brahmans and Khatris, individual women of tribal parentage can be absorbed through the mechanism of tolerated, even though not ritually sanctified marital unions with men of higher status. But such women are lost to their natal community, and do not in any way serve as a link between the caste society of their husbands and the tribal group of their parents. The children of such women try to disguise their tribal ancestry and strive for acceptance within their father's group. Newar women contracting irregular unions with tribal men meet the same fate as Chetri

women under similar circumstances. They are cast out of their natal caste and have no other choice than complete assimilation to their conjugal society.

Social intercourse—as distinct from occasional intermarriage—between members of the hierarchically ordered caste society of Brahmans, Chetris and Newars and members of the casteless tribal societies of such ethnic groups as Gurungs, Magars, Tamangs and Sherpas is non-existent wherever the former predominate, and particularly in the Nepal Valley. A very different situation, however, prevails in regions of tribal predominance. In the society of the Buddhist Sherpas, for instance, strangers of any touchable caste[6] are freely admitted to commensality and connubium. Newars or Chetris who settle among Sherpas and accept their way of life are easily integrated, and their children appear to all intents and purposes as Sherpas. In Khumbu, an area close to the Tibetan frontier which is purely Buddhist and Sherpa in character, there are many families of partly Chetri, Newar and Gurung ancestry. They appear in every respect as Sherpas except for the fact that those descended, say, from Newars in the male line, have no Sherpa clan-name but use the term "Newar" in place of a clan-name. In this society it depends on the individual stranger whether he wishes to be fully integrated, and in Namche Bazar I have seen a Newar married to a Sherpa woman, who dressed as Sherpa, spoke Sherpa and acted in every respect—including singing and dancing—like a Sherpa. His acceptance by the host-community was complete. No comparable integration of a Sherpa in Newar or Chetri society is possible, and it is thus obvious that the relationship between the caste society of the Nepal Valley and the lower regions and the casteless society of the Sherpa hillmen is non-reciprocal. Concepts of ritual purity and of pollution erect in the former unsurmountable barriers against free social intercourse with outsiders, whereas Sherpa society, as indeed the society of all Bhotia populations professing lamaistic Buddhism, knows no comparable obstacle in the way of the social acceptance of strangers.

Those tribal societies which are aligned neither with Hinduism nor with Buddhism, such as that of the Rais and Limbus of Eastern Nepal, are equally open in so far as social intercourse with members

[6] Sherpas do not grant similar privileges to the untouchable Nepali-speaking blacksmiths settled in some of their villages, but conform to the attitude adopted towards these artisans by the caste society of their origin.

of other tribes is concerned. Sherpa trading-friends, for instance, freely enter the houses of Rais, and the latter accept food and hospitality in Sherpa homes. Intercourse between two such groups is not complicated by considerations of ritual purity and pollution, but while trade contacts are frequent and regular, there are very few cases of intermarriage. Difference in language and in standards of living are probably the main causes of their paucity, and in the cases of Sherpas and Rais, or Bhotias and Limbus, the difference in environment and climate—the difference in altitude of the respective habitats amounting in some cases to as much as 10,000 feet—may be contributory reasons. Where the economies of two populations are complementary trade flourishes, but the difference in techniques and manners of living are bars to mixed marriages as one partner would have to get used to unfamiliar activities. Competitive economies, on the other hand, such as those of two peasant-communities of different caste which share the same environment, provide less opportunity for economic interaction but facilitate the assimilation of a wife or husband to the day to day life in a household of different caste.

Just as it is impossible to divide the populations of Nepal strictly into "castes" and "tribal groups", the complex interactions of the various ethnic groups cannot be reduced to a single formula, and there must obviously be many local situations affected by variables not taken into account in the outline of inter-caste relations which I have here suggested. But even from the limited data so far available it appears that the caste society of Nepal operates along lines different from the principles underlying the caste system of Northern India.

A strict endogamy of castes and subcastes, tempered only by hypergamous relations between status-differentiated subdivisions of the same caste, is today a basic feature of the Indian caste system. True, this rigidity in the Hindu caste system may be a development of mediaeval and modern times, which superseded the more flexible system of ancient Hindu society.[7] But the present day social order of orthodox Hinduism is based on the assumption that there is no socially recognized alternative to caste endogamy, the peculiar

[7] L. Dumont has emphasized only recently that the authors of the Dharmaśastras would not have provided for the social status of children from inter-caste unions if caste endogamy had been a universal rule. Cf. his *Hierarchy and Marriage Alliance in South Indian Kinship*. Royal Anthropological Institute, London, 1959, (Occasional Paper No 12), p, 12.

relationship of Nambudiri Brahmans and Nayars being the one exception to this rule.

In the multi-ethnic caste society of Nepal, on the other hand, inter-caste unions are either fully approved, such as those between Brahmans and Chetris, or they are at least tolerated as in the case of unions between Brahmans and Newars or Chetris and tribal women. The issue of unions of either type have a recognized place in society, and there are entire caste-like groups such as the Khatris which *per definitionem* are the product of inter-caste marriage. A closer scrutiny of such a group reveals the full extent of the difference between the Indian and the Nepalese system. Khatris or Khatri Chetris, as they are commonly called, are not only the social and ritual equals of Chetris, but although all Khatris are of the clans of their Brahman fathers or forefathers, marriages between proper Chetris (i.e. members of a genuine Chetri clan) and Khatris are not thought of as inter-caste marriages. Yet, Khatris may have no Chetri blood whatsoever, but stem from Brahman fathers and Newar or tribal mothers.[8] The endogamous super-group formed by Chetris and Khatris is thus heterogeneous to the extent of being composed of two quite distinct sets of clans, namely Brahman clans and Chetri clans, as well as on account of the inclusion of the offspring of Brahman or Chetri fathers and tribal mothers.

Whereas the fissiparous tendencies of Indian castes lead to a progressing proliferation of endogamous units, in Nepal we are faced with a tendency to the formation of large, endogamous groups consisting of several heterogeneous components.

The recognition of the children from inter-caste or other irregular unions as members of their father's clan leads moreover to the extension of named clans over several status groups. Thus there are local communities consisting of Upadiya Brahmans, Jaisi Brahmans and Khatris, all of whom belong to the same clan.

[8] The use of the term Khatri for the offspring from mixed unions other than those in which the husband was a Brahman or a Khatri is incorrect. Newars have nowadays the tendency to use the term loosely for persons of mixed Newar and Chetri parentage, and the statement contained in the fourth paragraph on p. 247 of my article "The Inter-relations of Castes and Ethnic Groups in Nepal" (*Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, 1957, XX) is based on information supplied by Newars. Such usage, however, is to be avoided as it conflicts with the general view that only persons bearing a Brahman clan-name can be properly described as Khatri. My Newar informants seem to have used "Khatri" as a euphemism for *kacher*, a rather impolite term for "cross-bred" applied sometimes to the product of irregular inter-caste unions.

Where such groups of clan-members of differential caste status are found in the comparative isolation of a hill village there can be little doubt that their descent could be traced to one and the same Upadiya Brahman ancestor whose clan name they bear. In such cases common clan membership and descent from a common ancestor in the male line do not necessarily involve equality of ritual status. In other words, a person's caste status, which in India is normally identical with that of his or her father, appears divorced from the principle of unilineal descent, whereas clan-membership is passed on patrilineally irrespective of status changes resulting from inter-caste marriages.

The example of Nepal shows that a caste system can operate without rigid insistence on endogamy. Social intercourse between persons of different caste is adequately restricted by denying to those of inferior status the right of commensality. Concepts of ritual purity and pollution are as inseparable from the Nepalese caste system as they are from that of India, and the difference between the two systems lies mainly in the evaluation of sexual relations in their impact on ritual status. The fact that a man may live in permanent union with a woman of lower caste without endangering his own status illustrates this neutral character of sexual relations. It is consistent with this attitude that no stigma attaches to the children of inter-caste unions. The horror with which orthodox Hinduism looks upon the "confusion of castes" is absent from Nepalese social thinking, and it is not unlikely that prolonged contacts with Buddhist populations are responsible for the greater flexibility of Hindu attitudes.

This flexibility has facilitated the welding of numerous heterogeneous elements into a multi-ethnic society which has no exact parallel in India. In the Nepal Valley, and in other areas where the higher Hindu castes predominate, all these elements are arranged in a hierarchical order within which each ethnic group occupies one stratum or extends—as particularly in the case of the Newars —over a number of strata. In regions of tribal predominance and above all among the purely Buddhist frontier-people of Bhotia stock, however, hierarchic tendencies lose their force; for in the absence of concepts of status based on greater or lesser ritual purity, the different ethnic groups appear coordinated rather than arranged in a ranking system. Brahmans or other high-caste Hindus living as a minority amidst indigenous tribal populations which own most

of the land may themselves insist on a measure of separateness necessary to preserve their ritual purity, but their claim to social superiority is empty in the face of their tribal neighbours' disinclination to treat them with any particular reverence or respect. For those to whom ritual purity in the brahmanic sense is a matter of indifference, the Brahmans' avoidance of polluting contacts appears as an eccentricity rather than as an object of admiration. In such an environment distinctions of caste and race are not ignored, but they are largely shorn of their ritual relevance. Groups of separate identity there remain, but their position towards each other lacks the character of a caste system, the essence of which is the general recognition of a hierarchic order of status-groups accompanied by the appropriate behaviour in the interaction of their members.

The study of the social order of Nepal is only in its beginning, but the little we know of the complex interaction of heterogeneous ethnic groups clearly shows its relevance for a typology of caste society. In Nepal a system based on the ritual and social recognition of inequality has developed with variations unknown in contemporary Indian society. Whether these variations of the caste system are the direct result of the impact of non-Hindu and particularly Buddhist ideas on the social philosophy rooted in Indian Hinduism, or whether they reflect patterns potentially inherent in the Hindu social order, but eliminated from it in post-classical times, is a question which cannot be answered on the basis of anthropological data alone. Moreover, a great deal of further descriptive sociological work is required before the rich material of Nepalese societies can be fully utilized for the solution of the theoretical as well as the historical problems posed by the phenomenon of caste. The variations of the caste system peculiar to Nepal provide some relief to the "almost monotonous similarity" encountered by some observers in the study of Indian social patterns,[9] and their analysis promises to illuminate aspects of the complex configurations of social relations commonly associated with the concept "caste" such as do not become apparent in the traditional Indian system.

[9] *Contributions to Indian Sociology.* No. 1, 1957, p. 10.

WORLD RENUNCIATION IN INDIAN RELIGIONS*

by Louis DUMONT

Probably our greatest debt to Sir James Frazer and the English school of anthropology is that they threw down the barriers that had separated "primitive" religions, the religions of antiquity, and the facts of contemporary folk-religion. The Golden Bough is a monument raised in the name of "the human species".[1]

This assumption of unity has remained fundamental to the development of social anthropology even after the evolutionary theory with which it was originally associated has been rejected. The very phrase "social anthropology" may be due to Frazer, at all events it was the name he chose for the chair which he inaugurated at Liverpool in 1908. Many changes have taken place in the last fifty years and anthropology, turning from its early intellectualism, has become sociological;[2] it has developed monographic studies which might appear to be very far from the comparative studies of Frazer. However, we have become increasingly aware that compar-

* This is a slightly expanded version of the Frazer Lecture given at Oxford on 30.10.1958. Notes have been added. I am thankful for several observations and suggestions, especially from F. J. Staal. The French text was published in *Archives de Sociologie des Religions*, n° 7, janvier-juin 1959, p. 45-69. I am much indebted to D. F. Pocock and R. G. Lienhardt for the translation.

[1] This is what Marcel Mauss said as early as the first number of the *Année Sociologique* (p. 161, his review of Jevon's *Introduction*) and in 1897: "To deny the irreductibility of races is to posit the unity of human kind. To do away with the historical method is to be left . . . with the anthropological". (*Revue de l'Histoire des Religions*, t. 35, review of Steinmetz's *Strafe*, p. 31).

[2] Cf. Frazer's "The Scope of Social Anthropology", *Psyche's Task*, 1913, p. 159-176. Mauss wrote: "Intellectualism is only concerned with similarities . . . a scientific picture requires the consideration of differences, and for that purpose a sociological method is necessary." (*Année Sociologique*, vol. 1, *loc. cit.*).

ison does not, as was sometimes proposed, consist in a typological classification following upon the accumulation of factual monographs. In fact, comparison and monograph are intimately linked, each descriptive work is to a large extent dependent upon contemporary comparison while at the same time it contributes to it. Also, even at the level of a precise analysis, and particularly in the religious sphere, striking similarities continue to emerge between peoples far apart and of different civilizations. So, even though the comparison of religions, as compared with their description, seems to have advanced little since Frazer's day, at least the ideal which he set forth has not ceased to point the road, nor should it.

What then in the way of homage to Frazer's memory could a specialized worker offer if not the attempt to map out a particular field with a view to comparison? There is perhaps one thing we have learnt since the foundation of anthropology and its conversion to sociology, I mean that it is by way of systems of relations, gradually elucidated, that apparent diversity can be simplified and ordered. For this reason I shall speak as far as possible a language of relations.

It might well be thought a rash task to undertake, within the limits of this lecture, to offer a general view of the religions of India. It is true that their immense literatures have been the object for a century and a half of an admirable effort. To speak mainly of the West, humanist curiosity, philological discipline and sometimes even genius have devoted themselves to the reconstitution and understanding of an alien mentality, and the results of these labours have been summed up many times. However, to consider Hinduism alone, it is still difficult to set its principal traits in order. Its complexity, its internal diversity seems to resist the attempt. We are told that the grossest superstitions flourish side by side with the most sublime speculations, that the most varied beliefs and rituals are mixed with one another, while Brahmanic orthodoxy coexists[3] with a host of diverse sects. In the face of this, it is

[3] For example, Barth wrote in his *Religions de l'Inde* (Œuvres, vol. 1, p. 140-141): "The sectarian or neobrahmanic religions . . . despite many attempts . . . to reduce them to some kind of unity . . . have constantly resisted any such systematisation . . . Diversity is the essence [of Hinduism] and the true expression of it is the sect.

" . . . sectarian unity . . . is the only true one: in order not to get lost in infinite details or insignificant enumerations, we shall be obliged to remain at the level of generalities and to proceed by the use of categories."

Farquhar wrote (*The Crown of Hinduism*, 1913, p. 216): "Here then, we

understandable if some have sought clarification by looking at the data as essentially heterogeneous. Some have identified Hinduism with Brahmanic literature and dismissed popular religious practice as a "demonolatry" different in its nature and origin.[4] Or, comfortably adopting one of the most persuasive philosophical tendencies, one could neglect both the place of this particular philosophy within the whole and the truly religious development that surrounds it. Or again, we are occasionally offered, in modern India, a Hinduism which has been passed through the sieve of reform, a religion impoverished and altered almost beyond recognition.

have the Hindu world theory in all its permanent essentials: God real, the world worthless; the one God unknowable, the other gods not to be despised; the Brahmans with their Vedas the sole religious authority, caste a divine institution serving as the chief instrument of reward and punishment; man doomed to repeated birth and death, because all actions lead to rebirth; world flight the only noble course for the awakened man and the one hope of escape from the entanglements of sense and transmigration." (The absence of links between the different features in this inventory will be noted). Risley quotes instructive definitions such as these of Sir Alfred Lyall: "the religion of all the people who accept the Brahmanic scriptures", "a tangled jungle of disorderly superstitions" and then goes on to give his own: animism more or less transformed by philosophy, magic tempered by metaphysics. (*People of India*, ed. 1915, p. 233). Cf. E. A. H. Blunt, *The Caste System of Northern India*, 1931, p. 292-293.

[4] The dichotomy of Brahmanism and "demonolatry" was proposed in the middle of the 19th century by the missionary Bishop Caldwell, author of the Comparative Grammar of Dravidian Languages (cf. *Contributions to Indian Sociology*, No. 3, p. 57). Nearer to our own time the writer Bankim Chandra Chatterjee proceeds in an analogous manner in an unfinished essay published after his death (*Letters on Hinduism*, Calcutta, M. M. Bose, 1940). The author is concerned there to rehabilitate Hinduism after the condemnation made by certain Occidentals. The first part of the essay is a brilliant and sustained polemic in the course of which certain popular cults are thrown out of Hinduism: "the worship of 'stocks and stones', of the rude blocks under the umbrageous trees besmeared with yellow ochre . . . may be dismissed with a single word. They do not belong to Hinduism . . . There is no warranty for them in the Hindu scriptures . . . They are not accepted by the Hindu community at large. The local fetish of one village finds no votary outside the local limits of its worship. The better class of Hindus wholly rejects them." Bankim poses a question which merits attention: he remarks that those Europeans who condemn Hinduism confuse what is truly religious with what is not, while they are quite able to distinguish religion from morality or politics in the Occident. Leaving on one side any value judgement it is certainly true that the terms of a comparison should be treated parallelly. If, as here, we try to take a total view of Hinduism and refuse to separate literary religion and popular "superstition", we should do the same in the West, and if the sociologist is in favour of this, he must also admit that so far it has not been done. On the other hand, parallel treatment is not identical treatment. Bankim also says that in India religion is not distinct as in the West but is mixed with everything else, which might be said to justify Occidentals in not distinguishing. We should add that for him Hinduism was not one but several religions, having in common, apart from their source, their being backed by Sanskrit or other scriptures.

Of all these dichotomies, and in different forms, the confrontation with Christianity is a determining factor. Scientific comparison on the contrary[5] does not operate with such arbitrary distinctions, it aims at recognizing similarities and, more important, differences. It is found, at least implicitly, in all serious works on the subject. It has shown in Indian religions, as compared to Christianity, certain dominant themes. Of these probably everybody has become aware. But there are two difficulties: the first appears as soon as one tries to formulate clearly what one has more or less confusedly perceived; the second results from the fact that these dominant themes are broken here and there, as a river is lost in the sand: these disappearances have to be located and understood.

There is another fact that seems to witness in favour of a unitary definition of Hinduism and even of Buddhist and Jain religions: the diverse and often opposed tendencies that we know have, in the course of time, reacted the one upon the other. One aspect of this interaction is characteristic, it is the progressive integration or, as I prefer to call it, aggregation by orthodox tendencies of elements introduced by the heterodox.[6] Indian society and religion on the one hand have produced a rich growth of movements which were considered to be to a certain extent heretical, and on the

[5] I employ "confrontation" here to distinguish it from "comparison". By confrontation I mean first the historical fact that brought Hinduism and Christianity together and then the results of this: an attitude of rivalry, particularly on the moral plane, as much as a tendency toward syncretism which insists upon similarities and neglects differences (cf. *Contributions*, No. 1, p. 14): both are "engaged" attitudes opposed to scientific comparison.

[6] "Hinduism" is used here in the habitual sense to mean the present religion of those Indians who are not Muslims, Christians, Parsis, Jains, Sikhs, and with that exception, the religion of the caste society. Only I do not limit Hinduism by excluding so-called "inferior" practices: Hinduism goes on beyond literary Brahmanism. Hinduism of caste is often opposed to the animism of tribe, but tribal religion often participates to some extent of Hinduism (for an example of this see *Contributions*, No. 3, p. 60 sq.). Historically we can say that Hinduism is completely built up in the period which saw the decline of the great heresies. The terms orthodoxy, heresy, etc. are taken in a slightly different sense from that which they have in the West, as this passage itself shows. Socially, interdiction amounts here to degradation, the condemned practice is simply the inferior one. Nevertheless it was in the nature of religion, even here, to adopt a more absolute attitude on occasion. Discussing the process of the aggregation of innovations, Burnouf wrote in the preface to his Bhagavata Purana (p. cxi): "apart from these innovations introduced by the sectarian [bhakti] spirit, which are always easily recognised, modifications to the old Indian system have been made by way of addition rather than by way of substitution, and they have preserved the ancient elements with a rare fidelity."

other hand they have tended to absorb formerly heretical inventions. This double movement, which we shall have to understand, presupposes a common basis and we do at least know the social aspect of this basis: a sect cannot survive on Indian soil if it denies caste,[7] and it has long been recognized that Buddha himself, if he transcended caste, did not attack or reform it.

As a first step towards a general view of Hinduism and of post-vedic religions in general, I shall try to bring together from a sociological vantage point the main findings of Indology. As a matter of fact, the direct study of a small Hindu group led me to abstract certain principles which, it then appeared, could be more widely applied. I shall start from them, and thence try to relate to the society and to each other the great complexes, movements or tendencies which classical Indology has revealed to us.[8] In my opinion, it is in relation to the society that we are able to consider religion itself—and not philosophy under the name of religion—without cutting it off from speculation when it extends over into it. Rather than attempt to apply to India our own distinction between religion and philosophy, which is, as long experience has shown, a difficult enterprise, I shall use another distinction, an Indian one. In general, by distinguishing different levels of experience and thought, I hope to clear some complexities and to remove some apparent contradictions.

I have previously suggested that the secret of Hinduism may be found in the dialogue between the renouncer and the man-in-the-

[7] If for example it is true—which is not certain—that the founders of the Vira Shaiva or Lingayat sect wished to abolish caste, the history of this sect shows that caste has reintroduced itself. (Farquhar, *Outline*, p. 262-263; Thurston, *Castes and Tribes*, s. v. Lingayat). The biography of a *bhakta* like Chaitanya shows an accomodation to caste rules, particularly in the matter of food. (M. T. Kennedy, *The Chaitanya Movement*, Calcutta, 1925, p. 119; 57, 61, 164).

[8] Wherever description only uses what seems to be generally admitted, detailed bibliographic references have not been thought worthwhile. The reader can be referred to: L. Renou and J. Filliozat, *L'Inde Classique*, 2 vol., Paris, 1947, 1953; J. N. Farquhar's *An Outline of the Religious Literature of India* is useful both for its bibliography and its chronological handling. Amongst attempts at a general survey view, I should particularly mention a recent synthesis by L. Renou, *Religions of Ancient India*, London, 1953 (Jordan Lectures, 1951) ; I came accross this work too late to make full use of it, but I hope that I have not wandered too far from what this great Indianist considers established. One of the difficulties in description is that Comparative Religion does not, at present, provide any general framework for reference. It would then be necessary to indicate at least the corresponding Christian formula for each Hindu one ; in fact I only offer here some notes in this direction.

world.[9] Rather than demonstrate the dichotomy upon which this suggestion rests, we shall take it here as a postulate which will be justified if it allows us to take a simple and consistent view of the whole both in its present shape and in its historical development. We shall see, I think, that on analysis the central role played by the idea, or, better, the *institution* of renunciation emerges more and more clearly.

1. Observed Hinduism and Brahmanism

Let us then posit at the outset that there are two kinds of men in Hindu India, those that live in the world and those that have renounced it, and let us begin by considering things at the level of life in the world. Starting from observation of common people we shall compare its results with the ideas, and practices, of orthodoxy.

In the first place it is known that the fundamental institution is caste:[10] the caste system is based upon a hierarchical opposition of the pure and the impure, it is essentially religious. Observation goes to show that the belief in gods does not transcend this fundamental opposition of caste. The people are polytheistic in their practice, and caste values are a basic element in a belief which is directed towards a multiple divinity, a totality of interdependent gods. Put another way, we can say that the gods have no reality except in relation, and individual divinity in isolation is as unreal as an individual human being. Everything is founded upon the complementarity of the pure and the impure, of the superior and the inferior.

In the second place, observation shows the importance of the institutionalized possession of a man by a god (or several gods). At least in those instances which are most clear-cut two religious

[9] *Contributions*, No. 1, p. 16-17.

[10] For field work results see *Contributions*, No. 3, 1959, and my monograph, *Une sous-caste de l'Inde du sud*, Paris, 1957, 3rd part, p. 313 sq. (pure and impure, p. 416-419 ; pantheon and individual gods, p. 363-371 ; priesthood and possession, p. 339-354 ; god and goddess, p. 383 sq.).

It has often been said that membership of Hinduism is essentially defined as the observance of caste rules and respect for the Brahman. T. Parsons, following Max Weber, is categoric: "Hinduism as a religion is but an aspect of this (social) system, with no independent status apart from it." (*The Structure of Social Action*, p. 557). More subtle is the following judgement: "From certain points, it [Hinduism] is inseparable from philosophic speculation ; from others, it is inseparable from social life." (L. Renou, *L'Hindouisme*, Paris, 1951, p. 28).

functions balance each other: while the priest presents to the gods the offerings of men, the gods descend on a man, become incarnate in him and, using him as their oracle, inform and direct men.

A third complementarity emerges from the study of village cults, it is the complementarity of function between a god and a goddess. While the god watches over the village land or supplies, the goddess rules the collective health of the group, i.e. particularly epidemics.

What becomes of these complementarities at the Brahmanic level? That between god and goddess is in general absent from consciousness although, as is well known, divine couples are frequent, the great gods having very often one or two female companions.[11] It will be noted that while the idea of a couple is present in the background, the individual divinity tends to emerge in the foreground, sometimes and chiefly the god, but sometimes the goddess.

We do not find the oracle at the Brahmanic level. He is replaced by the diviner-astrologer. Certainly we read that at the time of the cult the officiant is identified with the god, and this seems indispensable, but he does not prophesy, the god does not speak through his mouth.[12]

[11] An anecdote shows how these relations between village deities escape people of high caste. In North India, in 1954, I tried to find out whether, in the Dasarah festival, the goddess entertained relations similar to those met with in the South. A young college teacher who had come to spend the vacation in his village was with me. He could think of nothing of the sort, and when the enquiries revealed precisely what I was looking for (findings which later were to be confirmed and amplified), it was a small revelation to him, because he was wont to look at each deity in isolation.

It will be noted that the emphasis on marriage which gives the great gods one or two wives is not accompanied by any corresponding accent upon filiation. I have noted briefly (*Sous-caste*, p. 402) the difficulty which those two great lovers, Shiva and his wife Parvati, seem to experience in engendering children in the human way. (It would appear that only the Linga Purana bestows this faculty upon them, cf. Gopinatha Rao, *Hindu Iconography*, I, p. 35 sq. ; II, p. 415 sq.). Parvati is never, in the iconography, represented as a mother like our own Madonna. The maternity of Mary reflects, as much as the Mystery of the Incarnation, an emphasis upon filiation in accordance with the kinship vocabulary of our countries. It appears that the accent is either on filiation as with us or on marriage as in India, and that one cannot divinize all the elementary kinship relations at the same time. Let us note also that Uma [Parvati], sterile herself, sometimes curses the goddesses who become sterile as a result. The goddesses' sterility has then struck the Hindu authors. The situation of Shiva and Parvati recalls that of Zeus and Hera. Parvati's anger, in the Skanda Purana, when Shiva by himself gives birth to a son recalls Hera's rage after the birth of Athena.

[12] The identification of the officiant with the god or gods is elaborated in

Although the Brahmanic treatises know of impurity they naturally have nothing to do with "impure gods". Theirs is a vegetarian world where meat-eating is a sign of impurity and inferiority and therefore has no place among divine attributes. The "carnivorous" trait is absent then from the theory, but we cannot say that it is not found in practice: the goddess in fact demands blood sacrifice and is nevertheless supreme in her domain.[13] Summarily the same thing happens with the complementarity of caste: while the theory insists upon both hierarchy and separation, it tends to leave implicit the fact of interdependence.

Generally speaking, we can say that the complementarities of common religious practice become blurred and indistinct when we move to the level of Brahmanic practice, where however they can

the Agamas, cf. C. G. Diehl, *Instrument and Purpose*, Lund, 1956, p. 100-104, and p. 75 *(nyāsa)* ; cf. *L'Inde Classique*, I, p. 569 *(nyāsa)* ; I, p. 575 *(dhyāna)*. Similarly the vedic sacrificiant "passes from the world of men to that of the gods" (*Śat. Brāhm.* quoted by Hubert and Mauss in their Essay on Sacrifice, *Mélanges d'Histoire des Religions*, Paris, 1929, p. 26 ; the priest, p. 29 sq.).

[13] To consider not only Brahmanic theory, but also Brahmanic practice is a delicate matter. It would call for great precision, and even perhaps require a monograph. One can always say that the fact that Brahmans sometimes perform blood sacrifice is an aberration, or better still that such facts are not relevant to the theory. (But here precisely the theory is inconsistent and needs to be completed to be understood ; we shall return to this). It is more difficult to ignore clear and widely spread facts of interdependence, as for instance when one sees the Brahman at a certain point in the festival leave the temple of which he is ordinarily the priest to return to it after the bloody sacrifice to the goddess is over (*Contributions*, No. 3, p. 34, from Srinivas). Parallelly, during the festival of Navaratri or Dasarah, the Brahman reads the Devi Mahatmya which finishes with the execution by the goddess of the Buffalo Demon (cf. the iconographic theme of Mahishasura Mardini so abundantly found). At this time also the people sacrifice a buffalo to the goddess (see Henry Whitehead, *Village Gods*) and the episode in the Mahatmya obviously represents a myth corresponding to this rite. Here, then, the Brahman, if he does not operate, does recite the sacrifice.

The relative inconsistency of Brahmanism has frequently been noted but it has been considered from another angle ; it has been taken as the result of the aggregation to vedic of indigenous or "Hindu" traits. Masson-Oursel, for example, speaking of religion towards the beginning of the Christian era, wrote: " . . . to the extent that Brahmanism means, apart from the content of the *brāhmaṇas*, the inclusion of more and more 'Hindu' factors, the more it is reduced to a form, we might even say, a label." (*L'Inde Antique et la Civilisation Indienne*, Paris, 1933, p. 211). This emphasizes that Vedism does not provide the organizing principle of Brahmanism, and it is a confession that Brahmanism is not to be understood in this way. If on the contrary we look at Brahmanism from the point of view of observed Hinduism which is itself consistent, we can see that Brahmanism, unable to rationalize the presence of complementary opposites, sifts and substantializes Hinduism. Shall we say that the place occupied by the goddess is the result of a "compromise", that she is "tolerated"? Is it not better to state that she is present but that the system cannot account for her presence? We shall see later (§ 3) why it is the goddess that raises this significant contradiction.

still be detected. In Brahmanic theory they tend to disappear altogether. In so far as this theory represents religious consciousness, we find consciousness ignoring the relations that underlie practice. Of the two complementary poles it tends to choose one and reject the other. Without ridding itself of the multiplicity and the contradictions of the divine, it tries to give a reality to the individual gods. It gives a substantialistic theory of what is in fact a structural practice.

This can be seen also regarding the hierarchy of values in the Dharmashastras. There are three "human ends", *dharma*, *artha*, and *kāma*, duty, profit, and pleasure. All three are (necessary and) lawful, but they are so graded in a hierarchy that an inferior ideal may be pursued only so long as a superior one does not intervene: *dharma*, conformity to the world order, is more important than *artha*, power and wealth, which, in turn, is above *kāma*, immediate enjoyment. These three ideas are conceived as distinct substances, but let us consider, apart from the hierarchical aspect, what other relations exist between them. The analogy with the hierarchy of *varṇa* is apparent: *dharma* corresponds to the Brahman or priest, *artha* to the king or kshatriya, the temporal power, and *kāma* to the others. This is not all, and one can go further with the help of Talcott Parsons' method of structural analysis. First, *kāma* is opposed to the two others as an action flowing immediately from affective impulses is opposed to an action submitted to intellectual or moral considerations. Then, while *dharma* is moral universalism, *artha* is calculating egotism, something after the manner of "rational action" in our economic theory—but extended to politics, since wealth here is little more than an attribute of power. While *artha* is opposed to *kāma* as deferred satisfaction to immediate satisfaction, *dharma* is opposed to both as ultimate ends to particular ends, as the sacred to the profane. In the language of Parsons, *kāma* is expressive action, *artha* instrumental action, *dharma* moral action. The trilogy gives an exhaustive classification of the types of action and is based upon a system of oppositions.[14]

[14] About "substantialization" in Brahmanic theory, I have drawn from exchanges with D. Pocock. On the trilogy *(trivarga)* of human ends *(puruṣārtha)*, cf. *L'Inde Classique*, I, § 1150 sq.; P. V. Kane, *Hist. Dharma.*, II, 1, p. 8-9, see also III, p. 8-9; I have benefited greatly, on this point and as regards *dharma* in general, from the as yet unpublished lectures of M. R. Lingat. Heterodox movements classify differently. In conformity with an Indian tendency, even *kāma* has been codified.

To say that *artha* corresponds to the royal function should not be taken

This example shows clearly that, however much the Brahmanic theory of life in the world substantializes things, in reality it is a matter of relations. This is a most important point, for, if we were to consider the classical literature exclusively, the mentality of the man-in-the-world would escape us. This is not only because it is very different from our own, but also because it is disguised in the literature in many ways, and first of all by its being impregnated with the very different thought of the renouncer.

To say that the world of caste is a world of relations is to say that the particular caste, the particular man have no substance: they exist empirically, but they have no reality in thought, no Being. The fact is after all not new and has long been recognized, but all too commonly one speaks as if one had forgotten it, while observation and analysis continually reassert it. I regard it as fundamental and would therefore posit firmly, if at the risk of crudity, that on the level of life in the world the individual *is* not.[15] It is for this reason that any attempt to generalize must rest upon the consideration of relations and not of individual elements. It is why also for the Hindus themselves, from the moment they take a substantialistic

to mean that the king is not subject to *dharma:* the hierarchy of ends governs all, but *artha* defines the particular sphere of royal activity. The non-differentiation of power and wealth, politics and economics, is important (see for instance Pusalker, *Studies in Epics and Puranas*, Bombay, 1955, p. XLVI). For the Occidental counterpart,—how from Hobbes to Marx power has been abstracted in political economy—see Talcott Parsons, *Structure of Social Action*, ed. 1949, p. 93 sq., cf. Karl Popper, *The Open Society*, London, 1945, II, p. 120: "it is only through active state interference, through the protection of property by the laws and the physical power of the state, that wealth can give a man any power at all. Economic power is therefore entirely dependent on political and physical power."

In such a hierarchy there is no room for a radical principle of evil. As Max Weber says: "The conception of a 'radical Evil' was quite impossible in this world order" (*Hinduismus und Buddhismus*, Tübingen, 1923, p. 143). It is tempting to think that the Indian trilogy on many occasions plays the same role as our distinction between good and evil. This is not to say, of course, that any conception of evil analogous to our own is absent, but where we condemn and exclude, India hierarchizes and includes.

[15] To express the lack of conceptual reality of the individual being, one could perhaps employ Hegelian terminology: what is found is the particular *(Besonderheit)*, not the individual, i.e. the particular in which the universal is reflected *(Einzelnheit)*. This may well seem obscure, and the formulation should certainly be made more specific, but we are dealing with a massive, all-pervading fact which it is difficult for the present to circumscribe more precisely. It is impossible to bring together here all the relevant evidence. A certain amount will be found in *Contributions*. As far as personal observation is concerned, I have concluded my *Sous-caste* with these words: "Here there is no reality, only appearances, or better, relations." And the book contains perhaps not a single analysis which does not illustrate this statement. (See also *Contributions*, No. 3, p. 84).

point of view, everything, including the gods, is unreal: illusionism is here in germ, and its popularity, together with that of monism, cannot surprise us. If this is admitted, then the problem is to understand how it comes about that there is still something else in Hindu India, another kind of thought, namely a kind of thought which conceives of the individual as being.

2. The choice of salvation: the Renouncer

What is before us so far is a religious organization of society, shaping it according to the universal order and submitting temporal power to the rule of religion. There is no transcendent sanction: only the notion of this very order, conformity with which takes on the value of a duty, *dharma*.[16] This has been often recognized as the core of the religion of the Hindu living in the world. Still, even if we add the belief in a multiple divinity, this is not yet, by far, the whole of Hindu religion.

In the first place we must consider a complex of notions connected with survival and salvation which deeply mark Hindu religious life and are common to the majority of religious movements and sects which have appeared in India. Two closely linked ideas are in the foreground, transmigration or the flow of existences, *saṃsāra*, and the moral principle which determines the successive existences, retribution for actions, *karman*. These ideas are immediately related to the belief that it is possible to escape from the chain of existences and to attain liberation, *mokṣa*. The nature of liberation, the ways and techniques for achieving it occupy a major place in speculative thought. Asceticism, not only as a way of salvation, but as a general orientation, the tendency towards a negation of the world—ultramundaneity—have deeply imbued Hinduism. This has rightly received emphasis, but it is difficult to attribute

[16] In the passage quoted above, Max Weber emphasizes the absence in India of anything that might be called Natural Law. That is true from the point of view of the content of Natural Law. One cannot follow him in making *dharma* appear as positive law: "There was, in theory at least, only one law, it was holy, particularized according to status class, but positive". (*"es gab—für die Theorie zum mindesten—nur heiliges, ständisch besondertes, aber positives Recht"*). In reality, as the analysis of the *trivarga* has already shown, *dharma*, insofar as it is a law, is an ideal law having the same relation factually with positive law as our Natural Law. Since it is conformity with the order of the world, it is, at its deepest, that which becomes Natural Law when nature and convention are distinguished (*positive Sozialordnung* and *"natürliche" Ordnung* in Weber).

this ultramundane tendency directly to the Brahmans as, implicitly or explicitly, Albert Schweitzer and even Max Weber have done.[17] We must in fact make a distinction. The Brahmans, as priests superior to all other men, are comfortably enough settled in the world. On the other hand, it is well known that classically whoever seeks liberation must leave the world and adopt an entirely different mode of life. This is an institution, *saṃnyāsa*, renunciation, in fact a social state apart from society proper.[18] The ultramundane

[17] The attribution of ultramundaneity to the Brahman is more implicit in Max Weber, more explicit in Schweitzer. Weber has a very apt feeling of Brahmanic ritualism and quasi-puritanism, and of the problems involved, when he writes: "Orthodox Brahmanic Shivaism has, by [a sort of] ritualistic castration, transformed an orgiastic rite into the cult of the lingam" (*ibid.*, p. 336). Schweitzer, rightly on the whole, opposes world and life affirmation and their negation, as dominant respectively in Christianity and Indian religions (*Indian Thought and its Development*, London, 1951). But "life negation" is not absent from Christianity, and there is a need for a more precise distinction. Schweitzer aptly notes sometimes the blending of the two tendencies, as regarding *bhakti*. About the situation of the Brahman in the world, it is true that while being foremost he has to serve his employers (*Contributions*, No. 2, p. 58), but the fact does not account for more than his relative permeability to the ultramundane tendency.

[18] It should be clear that what the sanyasi renounces is the social world *(saṃsāra)* and not the material universe *(jagat)* [remark from J. F. Staal]. At the same time we have to extend the meaning of what we call society in order to include in it, not only the "world" or society proper, but also the condition of the renouncer. This is so much an integral part of the system that we cannot even surmise that the world of castes would endure without it.

We wrote rather summarily elsewhere that every man has the right to become a sanyasi and at that time dies to his caste (*Contributions*, No. 1, p. 16). One should be more precise. On the first point it is a matter rather of usage than of the written law: in fact there are renouncers of *śūdra* origin, but English law, following the texts, did not recognize them as sanyasis (Kane, *Hist. Dharma.*, II, p. 944-945). In fact I have generalized the Brahmanic idea and have called renouncers, or even sanyasis, all those who have left the world in a manner analogous to that of the orthodox sanyasi including, for example, Buddhist monks. (It should be noted, in passing, that heretical monasticism has deeply influenced the institution as we find it in Hinduism, cf. amongst others Jawaharlal Nehru, *Discovery of India*, New York, 1946, p. 173).

As to the sanyasi dying to the world the facts are that he gives away his goods and loses all right to family property, he draws into himself his sacrificial fires and henceforth must light no fire, he completes his own funeral ceremonies (Kane, *op. cit.*, II, p. 958: "sixteen *śrāddha* of himself and *sapiṇḍīkaraṇa* " that is the total number of *śrāddha* called *ekoddiṣṭa*, necessary), he is not touched by mourning impurity, over only slightly so (*ibid.*; Dubois, *Manners and Customs*, 3rd ed., p. 540), he is buried in a particular way and not cremated (Kane, *op. cit.*, IV, p. 231, for description see Dubois, *loc. cit.*) and becomes immediately an ancestor and the object of *pārvaṇaśrāddha* (Kane, IV, p. 518-519). If later he returns to the life of householder, both he and his children, despite the performance of penances, are treated as untouchables (Kane, IV, p. 113). Opinion is divided as to whether he should abandon his sacred thread and lock of hair on becoming a sanyasi, however

tendency does not play only in the minds of men in the world, it is present, incarnate in the emaciated figure of the renouncer, the *saṃnyāsin*, with his begging bowl, his staff and orange dress. We may imagine the reaction to this creature of the typical Brahman whom we may think of as he is still represented in a carving on the north gate at Sanchi (Vessantara Jataka), a round bellied figure, expressing an inimitable blend of arrogance and avidity.

In fact, to the three ends of life—religious duty, profit and pleasure—, the literature of *dharma*, which expresses worldly orthodoxy, sometimes superimposes a supreme end: liberation. This bringing together of all four masks the heterogeneity between the three legitimate and necessary worldly ends and the negation of the world which, although optional, is fatal to the other three once it is adopted. Another example, central to our discussion, is the place given to renunciation itself. It is often represented as the last stage in the life of the Brahman, who is successively novice, householder, hermit and sanyasi. The artificiality of this theory has been noted, for it also juxtaposes obligatory stages (novice, householder) and optional stages (that of hermit, *vānaprastha*, is even archaic). It seems as though the intention here has been on the one hand to represent *saṃnyāsa* merely as a moment in the life of the Brahman, reserving renunciation more or less to the Brahman class, and on the other hand to delay renunciation until the latest possible period of man's life, after his worldly obligations (the perpetuation of the ancestors, etc.) have been accomplished. In short, over and above the habitual orthodox tendency to aggregate, there seems to be here an attempt to limit renunciation in its relation to worldly conditions and, finally, a subdued hostility to renunciation itself.[19]

Shankara is of the opinion that he should (*ibid.*, II, p. 963-964). Similarly not all the different sorts of sanyasis are allowed to take food from non-Brahmans or from the four varnas (*ibid.*, p. 934, etc.).

[19] On renunciation and the *āśrama* theory, I have indicated the most common view, there are two others (Kane, II, p. 424). M. Lingat's lectures already mentioned have been of help to me in distinguishing more precisely between the worldly view and that of the sanyasi. Cf. *L'Inde Classique*, I, § 1230 sq.; L. Renou, *La Civilisation de l'Inde ancienne*, p. 79. On *vānaprastha*, see Farquhar, *Outline*, p. 29; Kane, II, p. 927-928.

As regards the aggregation of liberation and renunciation to the worldly view, I may be accused of arbitrarily splitting enumerations which are given as wholes. The reproach has been often, and sometimes rightly, levelled at philologists. It would be the more natural here, as, for the Hindu common sense, *mokṣa* and *dharma* are not felt as heterogeneous. I have given my particular reasons, there is also a general one which involves a point of

The man-in-the-world's adoption of notions which are essentially those of the renouncer should not conceal from us the difference between the two conditions and the two kinds of thought. La Vallée Poussin has emphasized this difference for Buddhism by distinguishing between the Buddhism of the laity, a religion, and the Buddhism of the monk, a "discipline of salvation", which he clearly defined.[20]

The renouncer leaves the world behind in order to consecrate himself to his own liberation. He submits himself to his chosen master, or he may even enter a monastic community, but essentially he depends upon no one but himself, he is alone.

In leaving the world he finds himself invested with an individuality which he apparently finds uncomfortable since all his efforts tend to its extinction or its transcendence. He thinks as an individual and this is the distinctive trait which opposes him to the man-in-the-world and brings him closer to the western thinker. But while for us the individual is in the world, here he is found only outside the world, at least in principle; also the relation between thought and action is different, for the speculation of the sanyasi tends primarily to a practical end. Moreover, and this feature is essential to our purpose, the renouncer does not deny the religion of the man-in-the-world. As La Vallée Poussin has said "he is not sceptical, he freely admits all the traditional and popular mythology . . . his aspiration is directed beyond the worlds, it is something hypercosmical *(lokottara)*". Here then lies the possibility of aggregation: the discipline of the renouncer by its very tolerance of worldly religion becomes additional to it. An individual religion based upon choice is added on to the religion of the group.

To consider Indian ideas from the point of view of the individual-

method, it is that aggregations of the type are a common feature in this field. In all such enumerations it is essential to distinguish the true wholes and the false, whether the latter are factitious collections designed to fill a sacred number, or the results of aggregation. We have to deal here with one of a few fundamental cleavages, which have to be recognized in order to consider systematically real wholes (*Contributions*, No. I, p. 15-17, 20).

[20] L. de La Vallée Poussin, *The Way to Nirvana, Six Lectures on Ancient Buddhism as a Discipline of Salvation*, Cambridge, 1917 (Hibbert Lectures, 1916). The first pages (p. 1-7) describe in all its essential traits the distinction with which we are concerned here. If these "disciplines of salvation" are so different from religions proper, it might seem unjustifiable to include them here. But our author himself notes that these "disciplines" have had a strong influence on the religions and are superimposed on them without at the same time destroying them. This interaction justifies their inclusion here, we are dealing with two different parts of one whole.

in-the-world, which is the spontaneous western point of view, is to run the risk of obscuring and limiting them. We do better to remember that these ideas have two facets, one for the man-in-the-world, who is not an individual, the other for the renouncer, who is an individual-outside-the-world. In fact the man-in-the-world, and particularly the Brahman, is given the credit for ideas which he may have adopted but not invented. Such ideas are much more relevant, they clearly belong primarily to the thought of the renouncer. Is it really too adventurous to say that the agent of development in Indian religion and speculation, the "creator of values", has been the renouncer? The Brahman, as scholar, has mainly preserved, aggregated, and combined; he may well have created and developed special branches of knowledge. Not only the founding of sects and their maintenance, but the major ideas, the "inventions" are due to the renouncer whose unique position gave him a sort of monopoly for putting everything in question. Obviously I cannot here demonstrate this thesis. All I can hope to do is to show that it is useful to distinguish two "ideal types", which in fact combine more and more in the course of time, for the understanding of this combination itself and of some of the major themes.[21]

I return now to the idea of transmigration and of retribution for actions. Max Weber, with many others, has insisted upon the

[21] The renouncer is often of course of Brahman origin. It is frequently emphasized that the great heretic sanyasis, the Buddha and Jina, were of kshatriya or royal class origin; the fact is of secondary importance to the distinction with which I am concerned here. At the other end of the development, the Brahman absorbs the sanyasi: the great orthodox theoreticians and founders of orders, Shankara and Ramanuja were sanyasis and, not only by origin but also by their preoccupations, Brahmans. Shankara accepts and defends Hinduism but remains faithful to tradition to the extent that he denies the efficacity of works in the achieving of salvation. Ramanuja effects a synthesis: for him works play their part in salvation, and his sanyasis keep their sacred threads; *bhakti* had prepared the ground (cf. § 4). The development of Brahmanism is often thought of as the progressive accretion to a vedic base of aboriginal elements; vegetarianism has in this way been considered as a "primitive" element; one can certainly compare Brahmanism and Vedism but there is a discontinuity between them. The true historical development of Hinduism is in the sanyasic developments on the one hand and in their aggregation to worldly religion on the other. A historical approach like Farquhar's immediately shows the sectarian developments and their successive aggregations. A typical example is that of food in Manu. While flesh is still offered to the manes and to the gods and its consumption is permitted, even obligatory, in such circumstances, the pressure of the vegetarian ideal, a sanyasic ideal, is so strong that abstention from meat is mentioned as equally meritorious as the regular performance of the horse-sacrifice (*Manu*, V, 53; Kane, *op. cit.*, II, p. 772-782; IV, p. 422 sq.).

justification which it gives to the caste system. He has seen here one of the most coherent answers to the problem of evil. It is true that present misfortunes are commonly explained as the consequence of evil actions committed in a former existence. But it would be a confusion of levels, I think, were we to follow this author to the point where he finds in these notions one of the rare "dogmatic beliefs" of Hinduism. They belong much more to the speculative plane. First of all it is clear that transmigration is intimately linked with liberation, that the two ideas determine each other and are inseparable.[22] This indicates that we are dealing in the first place with the sanyasi's thought. In the West transmigration is often regarded as a pessimistic view of life since it seems to render any one particular life unreal. But as we have already seen, the unreality of caste and the individual in the world is immediately given. Transmigration does not therefore create it, it only represents or explains it. Further, when we find true pessimism, as with Buddha, it is in opposition to deliverance, it is a pessimism from the point of view of the renouncer, not of the man in the world.

One would rather say that the individual becomes real through transmigration, which passes him through all the unreal stages of the system. As the same thing happens to the renouncer—he becomes an individual—we could say that transmigration not only transcribes the caste system imaginatively, but also establishes the relation between the renouncer, as an individual man, and the phantom-like men who have remained in the world and who sup-

[22] Max Weber, *op. cit.*, p. 117 sq., 367; cf. Talcott Parsons' summary: *Structure of Social Action* particularly p. 558, 574. Weber, following Blunt, notes that inferior status and present misfortunes are explained as the result of sins committed in previous existences (as in *Une Sous-caste*, p. 414). Observation does not seem to confirm that the belief in transmigration is a "dogmatic belief". Farquhar noted the absence of these notions and of nirvana or deliverance, both in Ashoka's edicts which are, nevertheless, infused with *ahiṃsā*, and in the Arthashastra which refers to popular religion and to atheistic philosophies. Kane points out the contradiction between orthodox rites addressed to the dead and ideas of *karman* and rebirth, and adopts an historical explanation (IV, p. 335 sq.). One could possibly say that death liberates several different principles, as this is probably implied in popular funeral practices. It is true also that Brahmanic funerary rites have petrified ancient beliefs. But above all transmigration is not a belief, in the sense that there is nothing corresponding to it in the religion of the group, no kind of rite: it is speculative and belongs to that field of religion which is open to individual option, its main relation is with liberation; more than "a product of Brahmanic intellectualism" as Weber described it, it is a product of the situation and the thought of the sanyasi. Australian transmigration, for example, being related to the totem, is quite different (Durkheim, *Formes élémentaires*, p. 353 sq.).

port him. Transmigration is the idea which the renouncer, turned towards liberation, has of the world he has left behind. Rather than a pessimistic view, transmigration would appear as a bold design lending to the men-in-the-world some reality taken from that which the renouncer has found for himself.

Within the framework of worldly religion, the moral determinism that governs the retribution of action looks very intellectual indeed. It directs us more precisely to the historical origin of these ideas, which I shall now briefly consider. They appear before the formation of the caste system proper,[23] they are an early product of that extraordinary post-vedic and pre-hindu development which goes on from the first Upanishads to the Bhagavadgita, the golden age of speculation in which emerge. from discovery to discovery, the dominant tendencies of Hindu thought. Rich and diverse as this movement appears, it is the work of renouncers, and the various conclusions reached seem governed by the logic of renunciation. A critical movement, it begins with the reduction of vedic polytheism to the power of sacrifice, and the first Upanishads proclaim the identity of the individual Self and the universal Being. The extraordinary intellectual and spiritual effervescence which followed has been often noted, and in a fine book which appeared recently Miss Silburn shows us anew the milieux of renouncers, ascetics *(śramaṇa)*, itinerants *(parivrajaka)*, and others.[24] As against the

[23] Barth saw rebirth in the Upanishads as "the very condition of the personal being" (*Rel. Inde*, p. 79). He found in it "speculative audacity rather than lassitude and sufferance" (*ibid.*, p. 84). If the idea emerged before caste we must be careful not to project into that remote period what we find in modern India; in speaking of "renouncers" in a slightly later age we must also guard against the same danger. Strictly one should be more precise and speak, to begin with, of Brahmans, Kings, hermits *(vānaprastha)*, etc . . .

[24] Lilian Silburn, *Instant et Cause. Le discontinu dans la pensée philosophique de l'Inde*, Paris, Vrin, 1955, who admirably demonstrates the "theory of action" aspect of Buddhism. La Vallée Poussin has emphasized the rationalistic, quasi-scientific aspect of retribution, and pointed out that it only becomes moral with Buddha (*op. cit.*, p. 58 sq.). Determinism was already present in Vedism where it warranted the efficacy of ritual action, *karman*. In the subsequent development, while knowledge is extolled above action, action is widened and tends to acquire a moral value. Both facts show that we have passed from the priest to the philosopher.

I have employed the terms "salvation" and "liberation" indifferently; while the Christian conception of salvation has a moral aspect, the sanyasi's liberation, *mokṣa*, transcends morality, which is limited to the sphere of *karman*. Again, it is not one man with a particular existence who is liberated but a whole string of successive existences which comes to an end, having previously become condensed in the renouncing individual: he is not only himself; there is here a necessary link with what has been called Buddhist charity.

"eternalists", the "nihilists", materialists or evolutionists, are known to us, even though they established no roots, from the refutations of rival schools. Transmigration based on retribution had already appeared and seems to have occupied a prominent place in these discussions. The Buddha, who had learnt much from the nihilists, took the "middle way": denying the existence of any kind of absolute with which man, himself devoid of essence, might identify himself, he nevertheless held firmly to transmigration.[25] It is easy to see why: without transmigration the liberation or extinction *(nirvāṇa)* which he recommends would lose all meaning, and with that would be lost the free choice, the free action of man. The whole situation is extremely significant and to my mind confirms the preceding analysis. Let us note two things only: on the one hand, that Buddhism truly expresses the place of the individual in Indian society, and on the other the fact that the extreme philosophies, those who denied either transmigration or the possibility of freedom from it, that is to say finally those that rejected the Indian combination of society and the renouncer, have not survived for long.

The Buddhist point of view was not the only conclusion of the movement following upon the discovery of the identity of the Self and Being, of *ātman* and *brahman*. L. Silburn, who sees in transmigration-retribution one of the first stages of the movement, describes it as a march from monism and immanence to transcendence and dualism (p. 118). To contemplation pure and simple, to a discipline *(yoga)* of concentration there succeeds a yoga of

[25] According to La Vallée Poussin, Buddha judged quite differently those who believed in a permanent individual Self—which prevented them from reaching sanctity and nirvana, but not from acquiring merits—and those who denied both future life and retribution. Such a negation was adjudged as a sin like murder or theft, a heresy *par excellence*, for "it is destructive of all morality, and precipitates the unbeliever into hell: 'You say that there is no future life. Well, the executioners of Yama, the king and the judge of the dead, will soon change your opinion on the matter' " (*op. cit.*, p. 46). L. Silburn aims to show that there is no contradiction on Buddha's part as has been claimed, in denying any principle of permanence in the person and at the same time in holding to the belief in transmigration. Continuity is only the result of the will. La Vallée Poussin had already pointed out that the person born of a death is no more the same as that who died than it is different, here is the "middle way": neither permanence nor complete discontinuity. Buddha took the continuity of the living person and rebirth as two facts on the same level of experience. His anger, noted above, shows the necessity of the attitude: for him there was neither morality nor human liberty without retributive transmigration: this shows that transmigration is not pessimism but the necessary condition of the individual's existence.

discrimination, an effort to reach, beyond the *ātman*, the tiny man *(puruṣa)* concealed in the inner heart, which leads finally to the dualism of the *sāṁkhya* system and to the personal God or Lord with whom the individual communicates by love *(bhakti)*. This process seems to correspond to the progressive building up of the individuality of the thinker, i.e. of the renouncer.[26]

I shall return to *bhakti* and to the sects through which the renouncer has completed and modified religion. To be complete one should also mark the major stages in the process of aggregation to orthodoxy of sanyasic values. Let me say only that one important point concerns ideas of vegetarianism and nonviolence which seem to have been imitated by the Brahmans as a result of the prestige of the great heresies. Hinduism proper is complete only after it has reconquered India from Buddhism and Jainism.

To sum up so far, group religion on one side, the "disciplines of salvation" on the other, and finally their interaction, the main features of which I have tried to indicate, constitute the principal factors of religion in traditional India. It is on this basis that the great number of particular developments have taken place. But even so we have only reached what I might call the restricted formula of this religion, and in order to attain its generalized or complete formula, another tendency, to a great extent heterogeneous, remains to be considered.

3. COMPARISON: THE PLACE OF THE TANTRAS

Let us compare on one point our restricted formula with a theoretical view of primitive religion. From Durkheimian sociology, one expects to find an alternation in time corresponding to the distinc-

[26] This summary is inevitably very crude. I wanted simply to point a general development (cf. particularly L. Silburn, *op. laud.*, Ch. III). It seems *a priori* that there are two ways open to the man who leaves the world and finds himself endowed, as a result of his renunciation, with an individuality. He can assume this individuality in order to end it by liberation, this is the way of Buddha, who only maintains the liberty of man for this end (it being granted that out of compassion one may delay this end). Or he can accept his individuality to control and order it, such would seem to be the way corresponding to *sāṁkhya* dualism and the monotheism of *bhakti*. The parallel with the dominant representations accompanying the affirmation of the individual in the West will be noted.

tion between sacred and profane. In the last resort everything rests upon the sacred, but the profane must, at the same time, have recourse to it and protect itself from it. In particular the everyday order of things is *indirectly* founded upon the absolute order, it is shaken up, contradicted and renewed at the same time in festivals when the sacred irrupts for a limited period and reverses the ordinary norms of conduct, replacing separation by communion, interdiction by licence. In the Hinduism of the restricted formula, we find little of this. There is of course the popular festival of Holi, but it is not found in the South, where one can observe village life for a whole year and note the relative absence of that excess and unbridled joy which is commonly associated with the idea of a festival. This can be understood without bringing in the puritanical tendency upon which Max Weber rightly insists. For what is characteristic of the Indian order is, with a division of labour based upon the fundamental religious values, a complete differentiation between the spiritual and the temporal. This allows society, in relegating the temporal to a subordinate position, and in contradistinction to simpler societies, to found itself *directly* upon the absolute order. This being so, one can understand that we do not find either reciprocal alternations in the handling of impurity, here in essentials the business of specialists, or a complete reversal of values during the festival. I would go so far as to say that even the latter is replaced by a division of labour. For in fact, the everyday order, if it is here the permanent order in the world, does become relative, but only in comparison with the values of the sanyasi. In him, as the extramundane individual, a special kind of sacredness is reserved. With his negation of the world and his asceticism, he represents that very reversal of values which we might expect to have found in the festival. Put another way we could say that he is the safety valve for the Brahmanic order, which is able to give the transcendent a permanent place while remaining out of the range of its attacks. By means of this compromise the Brahman rules over the world in peace, as a rather monotonous immanence.

If this is true it is, nevertheless, only a part of the truth: there is also a large branch of Hinduism in which I believe we can see the rejection of ascetic renunciation and also, in its place, that reversal of values that we looked for earlier. It is Tantrism. An essential rite in the tantric cult, the *pañcatattva*, consists in the sacramental

enjoyment of all that is forbidden or despised in ordinary life: meat and fish, alcohol, sexual intercourse. To quote a text of the Kula or Kaula:[27]

"For the adepts let that be drink which should not be drunk and that food which should not be eaten, and that which should not be the object of intercourse—let it be so".

The rejection of ascetism is expressed in the rehabilitation of enjoyment, *bhoga*. But it is characteristic that *yoga*, or the discipline of liberation, is at the same time preserved, and that the doctrine claims to transcend the opposition of *yoga*, discipline, and *bhoga*, enjoyment. "Either the *yogī* is not a *bhogī* (enjoyer), or the *bhogī* knows not *yoga* [we are lost in contradiction], that is why the *kaula* doctrine, whose essence is of *bhoga* and *yoga*, is superior to all . . .". In the clear concision of Sanskrit:

yogī cennaiva bhogī syād bhogī cennaiva yogavit|
bhogayogātmakam kaulam tasmāt sarvādhikam priye||

We see that all in rejecting renunciation, Tantrism accepts ideas deriving from it. Far from making a *tabula rasa*, it builds upon what has been acquired through renunciation and has become at least a sort of universal language in India. In particular we are now, for ever, at the level of the religion of the individual. Not only do our texts speak of yoga but also of liberation:

"The pleasure born of wine, of meat, of woman is salvation *(mokṣa)* for him who knows, for the non-initiate it is a fall *(pātakam)*".

It seems that Tantrism had its *avadhūta*, equivalent of the sanyasis, it certainly also did not ignore transmigration. The same text however shows admirably the heterogeneity of Kula tantrism and how it transcends these notions, particularly the opposition

[27] I take Tantrism here as being essentially the literature of the *śākta*, and secondarily the related texts of other movements. The following may be referred to: *Inde Classique*, I § 844 sq., 1181, 1217 sq., 1277 sq., and Farquhar, *Outline*, p. 150-151, 199 sq., 265 sq. The choice of quotations is taken from Heinrich Zimmer, *Kunstform und Yoga im Indischen Kultbild*, Berlin, 1926, p. 178 sq., cf. *Kulārnavatantra*, ed. A. Avalon, *Tantrik Texts*, vol. 5, London, 1917, respectively IX, 57; II, 23; IX, 50 (quoted in *Inde Class.*, I, § 1221); II, 24.

between transmigration and liberation. The verse follows immediately upon the reconciliation of discipline and enjoyment:

"Evidently, in the *kula* doctrine, enjoyment becomes yoga *(bhogo yogāyate)*, sin becomes good action, transmigration becomes liberation *(saṃsāra mokṣāyate)*.[28]

I have referred to what is often called the extreme form of Tantrism, which the Indians call left-hand Tantrism to distinguish it from the more conformist right-hand Tantrism. (Incidentally we find acknowledged in these expressions the incompatibility between reversal cults and the restricted formula). But the left-hand form seems to be the pure one. It is true that there are attenuations, substitutions and sublimations; it is true that the left-hand practices appear, in Tantrism itself, and perhaps progressively through the centuries, mixed and combined with right-hand practices, to produce finally a system in which right-hand forms predominate, but which preserves nevertheless its distinctiveness.[29]

Even though Tantrism is in principle open to all without distinc-

[28] Quoted by B. K. Majumdar in A. Avalon, *Principles of Tantra*, II, p. cxlix (with the variant *samyak* instead of *sākṣat*) and translated " . . . and the world becomes the seat of liberation". The lack of exactitude is remarkable in a probable Tantrist; the fact that he takes *saṃsāra* to mean "world" is perhaps characteristic. On the sanyasis, cf. note 30; on transmigration, karman: *Mahanirvana Tantra*, trad. Avalon, London, 1913, XIV, p. 10 sq. and *Principles*, I, p. 203-204.

[29] As regards the left-hand forms, it is considered good taste to speak of extreme, excessive or even abominable forms, or to attempt to minimize and excuse them. As if the sacred were a matter of measure! M. Renou, on the contrary, has shown that these are the essential forms (the left-handed *vīra* mode), and that, since it is a sacramental matter, the usual moral condemnation is out of place (*Inde Class.*, p. 593-596).

Farquhar has offered the historical hypothesis (*op. cit.*, p. 268). The tantra is not only open to all five classes (four *varṇa* plus the *sāmānya* or common people), and to women, but supernatural sanctions threaten anyone refusing to initiate an untouchable, a woman can be a guru, and the sacrifice of widows is forbidden (*Mahanirvana Tantra, ibid.*, V, 12 p. 159; V, 187, 178, 180 p. 357; X, 74). There is even a trace of hostility to the twice-born.

In a reputedly late work like the *Mahanirvana Tantra*, Tantrism emerges as a mixture of heteroclitic conceptions, with Shankarian monism predominant. Nevertheless one finds, even in a modern work like the *Tantratattva*, the profound inspiration which I have noted together with the emphasis on realisation *(sādhana):* monism is true but inaccessible, the starting point is in the dualism of the world. Finally the world is rehabilitated in a subordinate position as "a most spacious and sacred field full of materials for *sādhana*." Here we are at opposite remove from renunciation and classical ultramundaneity, (including samkhyan dualism), and nearer to Christianity than anywhere else in India (*Principles of Tantra*, p. 82 sq.). It can easily be seen how this attitude is related to the sacramental usage of the things of this world by virtue of reversal.

tion of caste or sex, it is not, taken as a whole, a sect. It is, rather, a tendency which has affected all movements including Buddhism. The rite to which I have referred is a *śākta* rite and the Shaktas, with their elaborate initiations, come close to being a sect. However, from their ritual alone, I have the impression that Shaktism is an esoteric religion for people in the world rather than a sect founded upon renunciation.[30]

The *śākta* are the worshippers of *śakti*, the supreme goddess who incarnates the energy of the male god(s). We can distinguish in it a properly religious aspect and a philosophical aspect. On the religious side one notes first of all the notion of the sexual couple: the couple is identical with the All, it is represented in the act of love. Here a kind of complementarity which we encountered in common religion is acknowledged. From this point, it seems natural that the cult of the female principle is at the heart of Shaktism as a religion: the couple once regarded as essential, by virtue

[30] According to the *Mahanirvana Tantra* two conditions *(āśrama)* are distinguished instead of four: that of householder and that of renouncer or *avadhūta*. The initiation of the latter is described; it must always follow upon life in the world and no one is allowed to leave the world who has close relatives to maintain (p. 158-160; 184 sq.).

In principle four classes of *avadhūta* or *saṃnyāsin* are distinguished (p. 352-354). In fact it is difficult to escape the impression that this is merely theoretical: the different modes *(ācāra)* marking the progress of the devotee are also mentioned, the highest being the *kula* or *kaula* mode: the *kaula* is the most celebrated of all, and since there is mention of kula-sanyasis, it is clear that there are *kaula*, and even "imperfect" sanyasis, in the world (*ibid.*, v. 172 sq., v. 150). There are contradictions (p. xliv, 184 sq., 249 sq., 351 sq.). The same text describes two initiations (p. 184 sq., 249 sq.). The first, probably *dīkṣā* (lxxiii), is the initiation to *saṃnyāsa*, the candidate leaves the world and receives the brahmamantra, no distinctively *śākta* element is in evidence. The other is an initiation to the *kaula* grade, and conversely there is no reference to renunciation in the ceremony itself, which is truly *śākta* and consists essentially in the initiation to wine (Ch. X, v. 112, p. 249, "By the mere drinking of wine, without initiation, a man does not become a kaula"), it is not called *dīkṣā* but *pūrṇa-abhiṣeka*, complete (aspersion or) enthronement. It would seem that this last initiation is that of those who are called "Shaiva renouncers", the first is that of the "Brāhma renouncers". Indeed we read in the last chapter (XIV, v. 147, p. 352) " . . . I have already spoken of the . . . Kaulas who are Brahma avadhūtas, and of the Kaulas who have been initiated [by abhisheka]." As far as the first category is concerned, is there anything more here than an attempt to aggregate (in the sense in which I have used the word) non-shakta renouncers? In fact this tantra is concerned, like an orthodox shastra, with the stages of life, the *rites de passages*, and funerary rites. We may conclude, hypothetically, that the renouncer does not play an essential role in Shaktism. The renouncer is celebrated as sacred and as purifying everything he touches (p. 192, v. 289; p. 355, v. 173), but it is a matter of the kula-yogis, i.e. of people who have remained in the world as well, in fact not of yogis but of kaulas (namely, p. 248, v. 105, cf. *Principles*, p. 51).

of the principle of reversal the woman, inferior in life, becomes dominant in the cult. There is ritual intercourse, a woman or a girl is worshipped, and the *pudendum muliebre* is drawn as centre for the *pañcatattva* rite.

On the philosophical side, we are reminded of the dualism of the *sāṃkhya* system with its "spirit", male *(puruṣa)*, inactive, and its "nature" *(prakṛti)*, feminine and active. Historically this dualism appears as a conclusion of the great speculative movement earlier mentioned. Spirit in isolation transcends the world, it has as its complement a material principle which is conceived as feminine. The remarkable feature here, as compared with occidental dualism, is the attribution of activity and energy to the material principle, while spirit is conceived as passive. In the West it is the reverse, as witness the fact that Newton could not conceive of attraction or gravitation as a property of matter, but felt obliged to see in it the operation of spirit: the notion of force seemed incompatible with that of matter.[31] It seems possible to see a relation between the character of spirit, for us active, for the Indians passive, and the situation of the thinking man, here man-in-the-world, active even when he constructs a philosophical system, there man-outside-the-world, contemplative spirit, passive in relation to the world in this sense that all his activity tends to a reabsorption or involution instead of a creation or evolution.

Regarding the place of Tantrism in general in religion, at least its importance in orthodox ritual should be recalled: the ritual in Brahmanic temples is essentially tantric, whether we consider the cult of images, magic formulas, the theory of gestures or written symbols. The magical side of Brahmanism, which is considerable, is vedic and tantric. While the restricted formula earlier described can give no place to magic, tantrism offers a direct hold upon the supernatural. But there is considerably more in it than a simple resurgence of crude magic: I hope to have shown that we are faced with a truly fundamental variant of Hinduism, in which renunciation is replaced by reversal. While constituting and codifying Hindu ritual, while mixing intimately with other currents, and

[31] Cf. Alexandre Koyré, *From the Closed World to the Infinite Universe*, New York, 1958, Ch. VII. Quotation from Newton, p. 178-179: "That gravity be innate, inherent, and essential to matter . . . is to me so great an absurdity that I believe no man who has in philosophical matters a competent faculty of thinking can ever fall into it". As J. F. Staal recalls, Newton continues a philosophical tradition going back to Aristotle.

without ever forming a sect in the proper sense (see below), the movement has kept an esoteric side. Also, it is by its very nature in contact with folk religion and can give expression to some of its aspects which the restricted formula would exclude, such as the complementarity of sex, and blood sacrifice to the Goddess.

4. DEVOTION AND POSSESSION

Another major tendency integral to Hinduism is *bhakti*, devotion, which has contributed considerably to the proliferation of sects. Here the divine is no longer a multiplicity of gods as in ordinary religion, it is an unique and personal God, the Lord, Ishvara, with whom the devotee may identify himself, in whom he may participate. "Participation" is in fact the original meaning of the word *bhakti*, and there would seem to be a linguistic correspondence between the devotee, bhakta, and Bhagavan, the Blessed Lord, or better He whose plenitude is open to participation.[32] Love, a total devotion to the Lord, suffices for salvation. Divine grace answers the appeal of the pure and humble heart. This is a revolutionary doctrine since it transcends both caste and renunciation, and opens for all without distinction an easy road to salvation, as Burnouf pointed out more than a century ago.

As distinct from Tantrism, here is, in my opinion, a sanyasic development, an invention of the renouncer. This religion of love supposes two perfectly individualized terms; in order to conceive of a personal Lord there must also be a believer who sees himself as an individual. Historically, devotion appears in the development recalled above (§ 2, *in fine*), since after one Upanishad the Bhagavad Gita reveals it and has remained as its Bible. Complex as the poem is and diverse as are the commentaries upon it, one can nevertheless perceive in it the very development which brought forth the *bhakti*. It expounds in order three paths to union or disciplines of salvation: that of acts, that of knowledge and that of devotion. The first two correspond respectively to life in the world and to renunciation, but they are modified and even transmuted by the intervention of the third. There is no doubt

[32] Cf. A. M. Esnoul, "Le courant affectif à l'intérieur du brahmanisme ancien", *Bulletin de l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient*, vol. XLVIII, 1956, p. 141-207 (etymology, p. 143). I cannot do better than refer the reader to this excellent work where the sociologist is pleased to see the "objective side" and the "subjective side" confronted (p. 164-165).

about the preeminence of devotion, for it is the discovery of this alone which makes possible the attainment of salvation through action. The central point is that, thanks to love, renunciation is transcended by being internalized; in order to escape the determinism of actions, inactivity is no longer necessary, detachment and disinterestedness are sufficient: one can leave the world from within, and God himself is not bound by his acts, for he only acts out of love. Devotion has come to take the place of deliverance. By transfering his conquests from the plane of knowledge to that of affectivity, the renouncer makes a gift of them to everybody: by loving submission, by identifying themselves unreservedly with the Lord, everybody can become free individuals. There is probably no need to emphasize the amplitude of this revelation. One would ask rather how it comes about that this new religion, so far from putting an end to other religious forms, has remained only one tendency among others. The perspective in which we have looked at it here, together with what remains to be said, may help us to understand the fact.[33]

The *bhakti* of the Gita is speculative and intellectual like the climate in which it was conceived. Its effusion is measured and ecstasy is absent from it. The Hindu bhakti proper, which we meet with later in the Tamil hymns and classically, in Sanskrit, in the Bhagavata Purana, which latter text itself tells us that it was born in the South, is on the contrary highly emotional.

"Bhakti in this work is a surging emotion which chokes the speech, makes the tears flow and the hair thrill with pleasurable excitement, and often leads to hysterical laughing and weeping by turns, to

[33] Burnouf wrote: "It is the influence of this easy dogma of devotion, which is, I believe, alien to Buddhism, which gives the Puranas that authority which they have enjoyed for several centuries in India." (Preface to the *Bhagavata Purana*, 1840, I, p. cxi). The sectarian aspect generally attributed to the Gita is in agreement with the view proposed here (cf. the following section). As regards the coexistence of tendencies, it will be noted that even in the Gita the personal Lord is also the impersonal and universal Being (cf. Shankara's commentary, A. Mahadeva Sastri, *The Bhagavad-Gita with the Commentary of Sri Sankaracharya*, Madras, 4th ed., 1947). The god *par excellence* of bhakti is Krishna, incarnation of Vishnu, and the theory of avatars establishes economically the relation between the personal God, almost a hero, and the Supreme identified with Brahman.

It is not possible here to point out the relations between Tantrism and Bhakti. To mention only one, it is remarkable that in the later development, the symbol of the love of the devotee for his god, the love of Radha for Krishna, is (generally) an adulterous love: in this way the transcendance of divine love in a context often tinged with eroticism is marked by the reversal, on the whole infrequent, of worldly values.

sudden fainting fits and to long trances of unconsciousness . . ." (Farquhar, *Outline*, p. 230).

This mystic ecstasy puts us in mind of what we have called possession, which so far we have not encountered at the learned level. Even some of the recommended means for achieving this condition recall those situations in which possession is habitually produced in village festivals: "we are told that it is produced by gazing at the images of Krishna, singing his praises, remembering him in meditation, keeping company with his devotees . . ." *(ibid.)*. It is true that "meditation" recalls also the ritual identification of the priest with the god (above p. 39), and also that the *bhakta* does not prophezy as does the possessed. But it remains nevertheless the case that both possession, a functional feature of folk religion, and *bhakti*, a characteristic of numerous sects, rest upon a common psychological condition, and that bhakti takes up in more of less sublimated form an aspect of common religion ignored by Brahmanic orthodoxy. Let us remember that possession by a god is in popular religion one of the circumstances in which the divine resolves itself into an individuality. Even though it needed a whole intellectual elaboration, identification with a god was given in immediate experience.[34]

5. THE SECT

Another characteristic of Hinduism is the coexistence of a large number of sects, each one having a more or less particular cult and doctrine. What are these sects and what is their place? The first feature to be emphasized is the intimate connection between sect and the institution of renunciation. Practically all the sects have been founded by sanyasis and the greater part include, apart from the worldly adherents, a sanyasi order which constitutes the nucleus of the sect. The link between both sides is provided by

[34] On possession, for the features mentioned here, cf. in particular, *Une Sous-caste*, p. 349 sq. On the circumstances of individuation, *ibidem*, p. 359, 412-413. The stereotyped cry of the possessed "Govinda, Govinda" (one of Krishna's names, *ibid.*, p. 351) suggests the influence of bhakti cults on popular religion. It is the common base that interests us here. Another feature of the day-to-day is found in bhakti, and is the submission in the face of a superior (in religion, *ibid.*, p. 412), but love does not come from the world of caste, and the name "Lord" is reserved for the divine. Certain bhakta extasies are so close to possession that one wonders whether one could not speak of "en-stasis" as is proposed, rather more as regards yoga, by the Rev. Gathier (in oral communication and an article to appear later).

the ancient institution of the spiritual master or *guru*. Instead of the renouncer alone having his *guru*, he serves in his turn as *guru* to whoever wishes. The institution is thus most remarkably enlarged or democratized. A majority of Indian heads of families, of all castes—even Muslims—have chosen a *guru* who has initiated them while whispering a *mantra* in their ears, and who, in principle, visits them once a year. Of course there is scope here for degradation, but by this channel the religion and thought of the sects, which is to say of the renouncer, penetrate to the great mass of men-of-the-world.

A second feature of the sect is that, unlike orthodox Brahmanism, it is not essentially syncretic but holds to one doctrine, the principle of its unity. Often in fact it is monotheist in the true sense, that is it denies other gods, the gods of others, and is not content with pushing them into the background. Also, as is well known, the sect, whatever its dominant inspiration, transcends caste and is open, at least in principle, to all, as is appropriate in a creation of the renouncer. Let us compare here orthodox Brahmanism and the sect. On the one hand there is a multiplicity of gods (or a speculative pantheism), syncretism and considerable tolerance in the domain of belief, tolerance that is of the *object* of religion, which contrasts with the strict exclusivism as regards the *subjects* of religion, the people who can be admitted amongst the faithful. The sect, on the other hand, is inclusive as regards the subjects, the faithful, strict and exclusive as regards the god and belief, the object of religion. Indian multiplicity has then its limits, it only bears upon one of the two poles that make a religion. Abstractly considered sect and Brahmanism appear as two variants of a disposition balancing multiplicity and unity, inclusion and exclusion.

It is natural to look at sects as non-Brahmanic formations. When looked at from the outside, it seems a matter of either-or. But from the inside, to its lay members, the sect appears as a religion for the individual superimposed upon common religion, even if this latter is relativized to the point at which Brahmanism is viewed simply as the order, or disorder, of the day-to-day world. The caste order continues to be respected, even if it is seen, in the light of sectarian truth, as a profane concern. Although one may come very close to monotheism, the attitude *vis-à-vis* the world remains that of the renouncer.

From the position we have reached, we can see that the developments of renunciation, with all their richness, are contained after all within narrow limits which they were unable to go beyond. Of the success of renunciation, in the place assigned to it by society, Buddhism is a witness. Situated outside the world but linked to it, the renouncer is impotent against it; if he ventures in that direction his ideas become ephemeral. On the contrary there is a positive dialectic between his "discipline" and the religion of the world. But all the prestige and fecundity of renunciation end up by offering to the man-in-the-world a choice of religions for the individual. At the end of the movement—an end achieved very early, with *bhakti*—, the renouncer is in fact absorbed, whether he invents a religion of love open to all, whether he becomes the spiritual head of worldly people, rich or poor, or whether he remains a Brahman while becoming a sanyasi, as with Ramanuja. By this point, if to every one the path of spiritual adventure is as open as ever, socially the circle is closed. The two kinds of thought, the two ideal types that I set out to distinguish, mix at the mercy of various milieux and temperaments, and men who are in spirit sanyasis live in the world. Incidentally if we leave renunciation on one side and consider only the fact of a religion of individual choice being superimposed upon group religion, something similar is found in classical antiquity, as when Greeks went to Eleusis for initiation.

* * *

To sum up, Hinduism, the religion of caste and of renunciation, has developed by integrating—in Brahmanism—and by tolerating—in the sects—the products of the renouncer's thought and mysticism. The most important aspect is the addition to group religion of individual religion, even in Tantrism which in place of renunciation introduced, as a fundamental variation and following an elementary formula, the sacred reversal. The devotional cults have on the one hand inherited individuation from the sanyasi, and on the other they are in touch with a basic aspect of popular religion. Otherwise and in general, what popular religion displays in structural form is found again, partly, substantialized and disjointed, in Brahmanism, partly in Shaktism and in Bhakti.

India has effected, in Hinduism and before it, a whole series of

distinctions which are not those to which we are accustomed. So far from being fanciful exoticisms, the complications of Indian religions only appear to us as such because we happen to practise different ones. They seem to flow logically from an initial position or, as it were, an initial choice, which can perhaps be summed up as follows: that the society must submit and entirely conform to the absolute order, that consequently the temporal, and hence the human, will be subordinate, and that, while there is no room here for the individual, whoever wants to become one may leave society proper.

At this point a series of comparisons with the Christian West becomes possible. To note only one, by way of conclusion, may we not see in what is in the West sometimes naively called the relation between individual and society a counterpart of the Indian dichotomy between the man-in-the-world and the renouncer? While man to the ancient Greek philosophers was still social man, the modern Christian development has led to a splitting up of this concept. I mean that the stress has been set upon the *individual-in-the-world* (a concept which would appear contradictory from the Indian point of view) while the social aspect has been left out and has reappeared as a problem: the problem of order, or of the convergence of individual wills, emerged with gathering strength. The need for a sociology, and the difficulties encountered in its conception and in its development constitute a complication which is perhaps the reverse of those India has experienced as a result of having deliberately placed the individual outside the world.

SOCIOLOGIES: URBAN AND RURAL

by David F. Pocock

I

There is a tendency at the present time towards further atomization in the field of social studies in India. This is apparent in the use of such terms as Urban Sociology and Rural Sociology as if these were to correspond to quite distinctive aims and methodologies. In part, as we shall see, the writings appearing under these titles belong to that branch of sociology that consciously sets itself to serve the policy of government or more generally certain moral ideals. But apart from widespread statistical surveys—of traffic rates in relation to road mortality rates, of infantile mortality in relation to housing conditions, which are conducted precisely to enable the administration to formulate precise policies,—the examination of more overtly moral problems in society rests upon knowledge of the surrounding and underlying conditions which the sociologist examining these problems frequently takes for granted. There is no great harm in this when the observer and those of whom and for whom he writes belong to one and the same society. Such works are the product of the prevailing morality in any society and they aim, if they are not in fact inspired by the aims of government, to stir up in the administration and the public at large, a desire for change. But it is obvious that between such studies and higher forms of journalism there is no clear line and also that such studies draw away from journalism and approach sociology just to the extent that the knowledge upon which they implicitly rest is made explicit. And the more explicitly are the areas surrounding the problem studied, the more is the writer constrained to hold back his moral presuppositions, even on occasion to modify them.

This in no way impairs his ability or the ability of others to *act* at the conclusion of the study. As Professor Srinivas has constantly and consistently urged, the greatest service that sociology can render to the moral ends of society is to pursue its own ends, refine its own methods and terminology, and work towards that sociological understanding which constitutes the distinctive objectivity of the moral sciences.[1] Action of whatever kind after all implies a judgement, and sociology serves its own ends and the ends of other best by establishing the grounds upon which informed judgement, and therefore action, can be made by men in or on society.

These remarks are suggested by some recent works of which I shall speak later. The main purpose of this brief paper is to consider the term "urbanization" and its theoretical implications. The practical end in view is the possibility of further research, research which, if it is to be done at all, must inevitably be conducted for the most part by individuals working alone.

The need for the inclusion of cities within the sociology of India is clear for more than the obvious reasons. We tend always to take the familiar for granted and the picture of India as a land of villages is possibly the result of an urban upbringing and urban education. Not only sociologists but also economists tend to use the word "urbanization" as a term too well understood to need definition or examination in the particular context in which it is employed. "Urbanization" covers the movement of people permanently or temporarily from village to city; it refers to the effect upon village manners of city habits; in some writings it is taken to mean the extension of cities on the ground—the way in which they grow from small towns or spread out to incorporate villages. Professor Ghurye has used it in the most general sense here in his widespread statistical analysis to mean the creation and growth of cities in relation to the total population of an area.[2]

The taking for granted of urbanization as a process affecting manners and institutions has led to a number of facile assumptions about some important all-Indian social features. Urbanization

[1] M. N. Srinivas, "Prospects of Sociological Research in India", *Journal of the M.S. University of Baroda*, 1953; *India's Villages*, West Bengal Govt. Press, 1955, Introduction; *Rural Profiles*, ed. D. N. Majumdar, U.P. 1955, p. 87 et sq.

[2] G. S. Ghurye, "Cities: Their Natural History", *Sociological Bulletin*, Vol. V, March 1956, No. 1; "Cities of India", *id.*, Vol. II, March 1953, No. 1.

brings about the breakdown of the joint family, slackens the ties of caste and decreases the hold of morality (this usually when *urbanization* is considered a bad thing) and religion (this usually when *urbanization* is held to be a good thing). And underlying these assumptions seems to be one only which is that urbanization and westernization are one and the same process with results which whether desired or deplored are finally inevitable. Such an attitude is not likely to encourage further and detailed analyses and we may leave it to others to decide whether it will encourage the development of the "good citizen in the good state".

I would at the outset suggest that it may be profitable in studying a city to bear in mind what, in our first number, we said of the village. At least we have in the suggestion that caste and kinship are primary in this society, a reasonable hypothesis which, if applied, would have the effect of integrating the city with other sociological or social anthropological studies in India. One may reject this hypothesis if one assumes that these two factors are precisely the ones most weakened in the city—an assumption which the few facts we have so far do not support. The evidence collected and analysed by Professor I. P. Desai in Poona and later from a town in Saurashtra suggests that in neither case do radically different structures emerge.[3] Writing in 1953 he pointed out "in opposition to popular notions" the continuing strength of the family.

> It seems that the pattern of the student's relation to his locality via his family and his caste is based on the same principles as those of the village communities in India. In so far as class appears it can be said to be a quality of caste. Apparent status distinctions find their explanation in the political and economic history of the castes in Poona which is in turn based upon the traditional caste hierarchy of India.[4]

From this observation a second point emerges which in part explains the over hasty correlation of urban with western values and influences. We tend when considering the relations of village with city, of countryside with town, to take over the attitudes of those of our colleagues whose studies have been of entirely peasant societies. notably in Africa whence so much of our knowledge of society has

[3] I. P. Desai, *High School Students in Poona*, Deccan College Monograph Series: 12, Poona, 1953; "The Joint Family in India", *Sociological Bulletin*, Vol. V, September 1956, No. 2.

[4] Ibid., *High School Students in Poona*, p. 80.

been derived. There certainly the township or city is purely a product of European interest and almost consciously and deliberately represents the alien culture of the West. We would not go so far as to say that even there urbanization equals westernization (again the evidence is slight) but it is reasonable to assume that leaving the Islamic cultures of the North, the two may be more closely correlated in East Africa than they can so far be correlated in India.

The mention of Islam is deliberate for it reminds us in our studies of ancient civilizations that almost from the time they were first historically known they had cities and that these cities are not to be opposed to their rural surround as the new to the old, the western to the eastern, the progressive to the reactionary, etc. It is temerarious but necessary, I think, to attempt a characterization of the traditional relation if only to offer it as a type for present analysis. In the first place I suggest that we cannot see the traditional Indian city as a mere conglomerate of politico-economic relationships. For a general statement we have at the outset Eliade's literary analysis of the city as *cosmos* in the ancient world. The foundation of the city, its maintenance and associated good government symbolically re-enact the foundation, maintenance and regulation of the world and more particularly the social order.[5] The city is seen as "standing for" the most complete and abiding expression of the essential social values. Were we to go no further such a view gives us some entry to the collective representations with which we deal and is to that extent already more profitable than any assumptions based upon a belief in economic necessity. But we have also the more detailed references compiled by Kane concerning the layout and social composition of the various kinds of city.[6] At the ideal level the city is the centre of caste as at the political level it is the centre of the king whose prime duty, one need scarcely stress, was the maintenance of the caste order. Kane cites authorities who distinguish between town and village on this basis, i.e. that only in the former were all castes to be found. The instructions as to the physical layout assume the representative quality of the city no less as they appoint residential areas for heretics and untouchables as well as the "four orders". It would also seem possible,

[5] M. Eliade, *The Myth of the Eternal Return* (English version), London, 1955, p. 7-9, 12-17, see also Fustel de Coulanges, *Culte de Vesta*, p. 6 sq.
[6] P. V. Kane, *History of Dharmaśāstra*, Vol. III, p. 178-183.

from all accounts, to say that not only as it was theoretically or ideally conceived but also numerically the city expressed the fullest possible development of the caste system at any given time. Apart from classical sources and the accounts of travellers from the middle-ages onwards it is evident that the rich proliferation of specialist castes, workers in precious metal, producers of luxury goods and the craft guilds into which they were apparently grouped depends for its very existence upon some maintained political order and upon a wealthy patronage. We hark back here to the observations made in our consideration of A. M. Hocart. Then, speaking of the dominant caste, we pointed out that "by definition it is the caste most able to pay for the full deployment of the system whereas the lower castes can afford to deploy only a part".[7] Moving from the village to the traditional city, the same relation obtains. The city in the past provided the ground for maximum caste activity. The number of castes, the variety of occupations in city and village are governed by political and economic activities, but the system within which this activity occurs and which makes it meaningful is a religious system.

These observations are made at a very general level, and should certainly not be taken as a history or an argument about the "nature" of the ancient city in India. Some cities have developed from forts, some from temples and even before the British period the points of the confluence of trade routes were established cities. All I suggest however is that it is profitable to remember that the Indian city, old or modern, is Indian just as an American city is American. Nothing is gained by imagining that the word "city" automatically implies certain comparable features.

In an opening paper to a *Symposium on Rural-Urban Relations* Professor Srinivas stresses, as we have done, the importance of the earlier political structure in a full understanding of later change.[8] He suggests for the small state governed by its Raja much the same relation that we would offer for the city. "Social relations tended to be confined within a chief's or Raja's territory . . . One of the consequences of such a vertical division was that the horizontal spread of caste ties could not cross the political boundary." The

[7] *Contributions to Indian Sociology*, No. II, p. 58.

[8] M. N. Srinivas, "Industrialization and Urbanization of Rural Areas" in "Symposium on Rural-Urban Relations", *Sociological Bulletin*, Vol. V, September 1956, No. 2.

collapse of such small states combined with improved communications made for what he calls "the horizontal spread" of caste and "every village became part of the widest political community then known, viz, the British Empire." The preexisting "vertical division" of which he speaks describes in a larger compass what we have already suggested was the case in the city, i.e. localized hierarchy disciplined, so to say, by its political element. The results of the decline of traditional political power noted by Srinivas for the state are the same as those which we have observed in the village where the dominant caste can be seen to play the role of king.[9] The fact that this structure survived so long despite the long influence of two alien forms of government justifies us, I think, in speaking of the slowness of structural change in this society. Only today and only in some areas has the dominant caste ceased to play its disciplining role without being replaced by another. We are so far from neglecting politico-economic factors in India that we would argue that it is precisely the decline of the king in city or state or of the dominant caste in the village that brings about that major shift of relationships which we call true structural change.

I have constructed a picture of the city as the place where castes both in number and in hierarchical order most nearly corresponded to a Brahman's ideal. But of course this is only the case so long as Brahman and King are seen in their ideal harmony in opposition to other castes. The King (political power) is also profane and looking at the situation not now in terms of the ideal but of behaviour and history we can understand that although the Brahman's spiritual ascendancy is never challenged his *actual* power and his capacity therefore to insist upon the ideal is in inverse proportion to that of the King. I do not of course in any way wish to suggest a conscious conflict where both parties are subject to the same religious world-order but an example best illustrates what I have in mind. The Brahman ideology of caste rests to a great extent upon fixity and the fact that a caste may change its status in its local hierarchy and in the course of a few generations only is, so to say, a "profane fact of change" of which the Brahmanic theory can take no kind of cognisance. Nevertheless it occurs frequently. Change is not recognized but doubt and dispute are and the King's role in

[9] *Contributions to Indian Sociology*, No. I, p. 38.

the settlement of such disputes was recognized (the Census Reports of the English King Emperor often played their traditional role here). In the settlement of such disputes as to relative status the role of the King, sociologically considered, is precisely to provide a traditional authority endorsing these changes which of their nature would seem to threaten the system. That the decision was framed in traditional terms is to be expected. A caste, despite living memory of inferiority, was said to be of superior origin and therefore entitled to reassume its ancient position. By framing the decision in this manner change was formally denied while its results were at the same time ratified. With this may be taken, as far as kings themselves were concerned, the subsumption by the system of tribal chiefs and Sudra warriors when they had in fact achieved positions of power; their power was converted into status.

The traditional king then in his very person often and in his function of arbitrator stands for the play of ambition, interest and conflict, for the operations of duration or change over against the unchanging timelessness of the Brahman's ideal. And to the extent that the city is factually the seat of the king's activity it is there that such contradictions in the actual world of caste are most forcibly expressed. But the city is also the field of another activity which operated and operates in despite of the formalities of the caste system, I mean commerce. Max Weber is probably correct in saying that "the core of the obstruction (to the organization of industrial capitalism) was . . . embedded in the 'spirit' of the whole system" but, as his argument suggests, this "spirit" could only inhibit or control activity, it could not prevent its existence.[10] The parallel with political activity is precise, the caste system seems to have acted against the emergence of a concept of the state, it could not prevent the emergence of states.[11] Commerce, like agriculture, is an "open" specialization which of its nature and by tradition in India is not exclusive. The need for a "rational" organization, the inevitability of travel over wide distances by land and sea, the difficulty, if not impossibility of preserving the occupation within one caste combined with the fact that trade or commerce was not for the majority degrading in the sense that some more

[10] Max Weber, *Hinduismus und Buddhismus*, p. 110, translated in: *From Max Weber, Essays in Sociology*, ed. Gerth and Mills, London, 1947, p. 411 sq.
[11] V. P. Varma, *Studies in Hindu Political Thought and its Metaphysical Background*, Banaras, 1954, p. 11-13.

distinctively specialized crafts were—all these factors would lead one to presuppose a certain tension between the operations of commerce and the exigencies of the caste system. That in fact there were corporations or guilds deriving their membership from various castes emerges from Kane's detailed discussion.[12] Majumdar is more succinct in suggesting a distinction (which we would *a priori* expect) between guilds in which heredity was important e.g. crafts, and those in which it was less so e.g. commerce.[13] The word referred to by Majumdar in this connection, *śreṇi*, is defined by Kane (following Mitakshara) as "a group of people of different castes that subsist by the occupation of one caste".[14] The political and religious relevance and importance of such large and influential mercantile guilds or corporations need scarcely be stressed.[15] The coincidence and conflict of interest between king and merchant emerges as an important feature of the traditional city which should, I think, provide a background for the discussion of modern capitalistic activity in the modern city.[16] I close this section with a somewhat lengthy quotation from an account of Bombay published in 1909 which exemplifies at once the traditional city and the changes resulting from the play of commerce uncontrolled in the modern era by any traditional authority:

The oldest residents of Bombay are the Palshikar Brahmans, the Pathare Prabhus, the Bhandaris, the Panchkalshis, the Agris and the Kolis . . . The Palshikar Brahmans were granted by the East India Company the special privilege of presiding at the religious ceremonies of the Hindus of Bombay and of administering medicine to the sick . . . These privileges were definitely ratified in 1689 and in 1723 . . . Up to the decade 1870-1880 most of the houses on the Kalbadevi Road from Ramwadi to the Robert Money School, as also those in the two Hanuman lanes, Chaulwadi, Gaiwadi, Popatwadi, Phanaswadi, and Dukkarwadi, belonged to the Prabhus

[12] P. V. Kane, *History of Dharmaśāstra*, Vol. II, pt. 1, p. 66-69.

[13] R. C. Majumdar, *Corporate Life in Ancient India*, Calcutta, 1922, p. 17, 20.

[14] P. V. Kane, *op. cit.*, p. 68.

[15] But see for examples T. V. Mahalingam, *South Indian Polity*, University of Madras, 1955, p. 373-378 and for royal maritime interests in Malabar *The Book of Duarte Barbosa*, Hakluyt Society, London, 1921, II, p. 73 sq.

[16] It would be most interesting in this connection to have a study of the Bania caste of Gujerat, a trading caste traditionally and functionally associated with the city. See A. M. Shah in *Society in India*, Social Sciences Association, Madras, 1956, p. 167. The commercial value of sect membership is recognized in modern Gujerat; this, with the traditional association of the Banias with Jainism, suggests a recognition of the *śreṇi* at the religious level.

and a few Palshikar Brahmans; and members of both these communities, particularly the Prabhus held important posts under Government. At the present they have been ousted from these areas by the more enterprising Bhattias and Banias who have acquired most of the properties in Kalbadevi road and the neighbouring localities . . .

Among the Hindus of Bombay the Pathare Prabhus have always set the fashion in dress, food and mode of living. Up to about 1870 the dress of the Prabhus was considered model attire by the bulk of the Hindu residents, and communities like the Shenvis, Panchkalshis, Sonars, Khatris, Vadvals and Bhandaris imitated or adopted it . . .

The condition of the older inhabitants of Bombay has materially changed during the last fifty years. The spacious houses and large compounds of the Prabhu and Palshikar communities have now disappeared and the habit of living in flats and chawls, which was once regarded as highly undignified, has now been forced upon these communities by the competition of other and more commercially minded castes.[17]

II

At the beginning of his chapter on Community Organization, Professor Gadgil points out that no formal attempt was made in the course of the Poona survey to study the social life of Poona or of any section or community.[18] Such a study would, he says "have required the use of techniques and agencies different from those used for the investigation of living conditions of families or of working units of economic activity." This is a great pity for his subsequent discussion and notes on communities suggest that a very remarkable piece of work might have resulted had one or two small scale surveys of selected communities been made either by himself or members of his team. We cannot however agree with him when he says that "It is . . . doubtful whether the social life of Poona or for that matter of any locality or region in India can be studied or presented today in terms of an integrated structure, or to vary the analogy, even that of a coordinated pattern. The main characteristic of Indian social life seems to be its continuous disintegration . . . there exist today no widely accepted notions regarding a scale of values, new or traditional, with reference to which the social framework may be defined." No sociologist could accept such a

[17] *The Gazetteer of Bombay City and Island*, Bombay, 1909, p. 167-168, 169.

[18] D. R. Gadgil, *Poona: a Socio-Economic Survey*, Poona, 1952, Pt. II, p. 172.

statement and in fact Professor Gadgil goes on immediately to disprove it with an excellent brief account of the position of political authority in the caste system and as regards non-Hindu communities affected by the spirit of caste. He points out that not only the Maratha but also the Muslim rulers of Maharashtra held and exercised the power of arbitration in caste disputes, he draws the conclusions from the disuse of this power by the British who nevertheless continued by their dominance to set up new standards for caste imitation. Referring to the fact that the drinking of alchohol became fashionable early in the 19th century he observes: "Concepts of social gradation could now become affected by standards of approximation, in the life of a community, to British ways of thought or modes of living." The breakdown of the old political system produced in Poona, as elsewhere, a "collection of independent autonomous groups without an overall authority which brought them, when such need arose, into significant relation with each other . . . At the same time the economic factor whose operation had been partially repressed or deflected by the fixed hierarchical caste gradation began to operate in society in a more direct manner than before . . . In this respect the most important change in Poona conditions was the rise in importance of certain groups of immigrants." The two most striking examples of such movement are trading communities such as the Gujerati Banias and the Marwadis. He is led by his analysis to concentrate upon the strength of the caste "bond" in Poona by which he means the internal organization or authority in any particular caste or community. The decline of hierarchy and a decreasing emphasis upon hereditary specialization brings this aspect of caste with the accompanying "casteism" to the fore.[19] In the matter of caste government, Gadgil notes that there is a decrease in the observance of "social observances and behaviour and religious rites and taboos in all matters, excepting perhaps, marriage." This is unfortunately vague and one can only imagine that a slackening in such matters as interdining, contact and dietary restrictions is here referred to. The mention of marriage is of course of capital importance and suggests a line for possible future research in Poona where the ground has been so well laid. The fact that marriage regulations have not suffered with other restrictions is enough to set us on our

[19] Cf. my "Difference in East Africa", *Southwestern Journal of Anthropology*, Vol. 13, No. 4, p. 289.

guard against accepting any view of widescale and general disintegration but Professor Gadgil goes on to note the new activities of caste bodies which have developed in the last century: the foundation of caste schools, scholarships, students' hostels, the purchase of communal property, temples, dharmashalas, the investment of marriage and death cesses for the creation of religious or charitable trusts. He notes the several attempts to create caste cooperatives or to establish agreements about prices between the members of one caste following the same trade; these appear to have failed due to the superior economic strength of the community or communities against whom the price fixation was intended to operate. In this matter also a profitable study could well be conducted by one research worker examining a localized, specialized craft-trading community. One of the most striking features of Indian city life for a Westerner is the congregation of shops all selling the same articles in one street or area. In England, at least, the retailer is careful to site his shop as far as possible from his rival and only chooses a site relatively close to a rival when he has reason to suppose that the proximity of his shop to a bus-stop, railway station, or any other centre of constant public activity will counterbalance the established "good-will" and clientele of his rival. Such trade tactics obviously do not apply in India, or rather in the traditional bazaar where there is one. It would be interesting to know why not and how at least the appearances of a competitive situation are maintained.

The material provided by Professor Gadgil and later by Sovani, Apte and Pendse[20] makes it possible to frame reasonably precise problems for field-research in Poona and even in other cities, Professor I. P. Desai's work for example is based on the Gadgil survey. To a lesser extent the *Gazetteer of Bombay City* which makes up in its rich detail for the lack of any informing sociological preoccupation provides a basis for a study of changes affecting and taking place within the communities there mentioned. This being so it seems a pity that Drs. Bopegamage and Venkatarayappa should, given the limitations of money and time, have attempted such ambitious topics as they have undertaken.[21] Neither work

[20] *Poona: A Resurvey*, Poona, 1956.

[21] A. Bopegamage, *Delhi: a Study in Urban Sociology*, University of Bombay, 1957; K. N. Venkatarayappa, *Bangalore, A Socio-Ecological Study*, University of Bombay, 1957.

contains the Poona survey in its bibliography and both seem to rely over much in their vocabulary upon studies carried out in Europe and the United States where the problems are essentially different and where the material available to the researcher is infinitely richer. It is not, after all, very profitable to apply the concepts worked out by, for example, Warner and Lunt without their resources and without attempting to modify them to meet the distinctive Indian material. I find it difficult to believe that in Bangalore modern caste organizations and caste localities or wards play so small a part in the life of the city as Dr. Venkatarayappa's account would suggest while, so long as caste is left out of account, I find it impossible to understand to what actually existing human groups and activities his use of the word "class" corresponds. Again, unless Dr. Venkatarayappa is being ironic, it seems a little idealistic to speak of Bangalore's "green belt", given the pressure on housing and the housing conditions in some areas which he feelingly describes. Generally speaking Dr. Venkatarayappa's work makes occasionally strange reading as the following passage, coming while his account of conditions in the factory area is still fresh in the memory, would suggest :

(Speaking of the population in the Retired People's Zone.) They are . . . interested in the activities of the Indian Institute of Culture and the Gokhale Institute of Public Affairs in Area 1 of the culture zone . . . Whenever meetings and lectures are arranged, pensioners are seen cheerfully engaged in discussions, taking active part in the lectures.

People residing in this area are known for their courtesy, hospitality and refinement. They have a reputation for their dress. The gold-threated turbans, that are commonly used throughout Mysore State, are worn by them in the most attractive way. Retired persons, cleanly dressed, with turbans on their heads, and walking sticks in their hands, moving towards Lalbagh, talking affectionately with their daughters and wives is, indeed, a delightful scene in this area.[22]

Dr. Bopegamage has written a serious and conscientious study providing a good opportunity for raising precisely those problems which concern us most at the present time. It is, as I have said already, essential that individual researchers should be enabled to embark on the study of people in cities now rather than wait

[22] *Op. cit.*, p. 142.

on the blessing of government and the granting of research funds for really comprehensive surveys. The approach adopted in this study is that of human ecology, that is to say it is primarily concerned with the concentration, diffusion and movement of the population both over the course of years and in the course of the day—it covers therefore long term immigration and the growth of industry together with transport and traffic problems. The book is specifically directed to the attention of "the city planner and to the administrator" and its final chapter is subtitled *A Blueprint for Redevelopment.* Now there would seem to be a contradiction here in the author's intentions. The study of human ecology, the distribution of people on the ground accords well with the arrogant pretensions of Raymond Pearl who apparently saw in the emergence of great cities "one of the many quaint ways in which mankind is coming to resemble more and more clearly the termites in modes of life and social philosophy."[23] I leave on one side the question as to whether the termites have a "social philosophy" but think it is reasonable to doubt whether they can be persuaded to change the planning of their mounds. The consideration of human activity in a city from the outside, even the breaking down of the earning population into income groups gives the sociologist no grounds on which to base proposals for change. Medical research may tell us that an average human being needs so many cubic feet of air and so many square feet of space in order to maintain his average health and governments may legislate for a certain minimum of window or ventilation space per cubic foot; similarly the city police may in cooperation with the city survey's office establish the relation between traffic flow, time of day and width of roads on one hand and road accidents and mortalities on the other: in neither case is the intervention of the sociologist relevant. But of course Dr. Bopegamage does not limit himself to demography and judgements of value run through his account of Delhi city: he believes in broad streets, green belts, hygiene, spacious housing, moral probity and civic pride—aims which he shares, at least explicitly, with people half the world over. One cannot make a meticulous study of an ant-hill and then exhort the ants to improve their conditions. Similarly it is not enough to make a blue-print for the future for one cannot know whether it will be accepted until

[23] Quoted by G. S. Ghurye, *Sociological Bulletin*, Vol. II, March 1953, No. 1, p. 47.

one has studied closely the relations which people themselves maintain with their present environment and with each other. It is obviously true that to oblige people to use the same paths in walking to their houses will oblige them to meet, but that this will produce "friendship" is as unlikely as it is likely.[24] Again, Dr. Bopegamage, arguing in favour of flats because of their economy of space and "communal facilities" met with the objection from some Delhi residents that quarrels might result from the fact that people on the higher floors would throw their refuse out to the annoyance of those below them. "But such minor drawbacks" says the author "can be corrected by teaching people good civic habits." The nemesis that awaits him is the one that has overtaken so many men of good intentions: populations are shifted from squalor and disease to live in perfectly planned housing estates with flowerbeds guarded by the local council, and they are profoundly miserable.

For one researcher working for the most part alone there does seem to be no alternative to the particular intensive study of one neighbourhood or street. He is able to formulate questionaires, if these prove necessary, on the basis of first hand enquiry and the results of questionaires should lead him back to make more subtle observations. The result will be to put in the hands of those who in fact must plan and direct change, if change is desired, a body of data which may be directly paralleled elsewhere in the city and which anyhow produces a consciousness of the many and intricate factors which a planner must have in mind. If social anthropology has shown us anything in the way of method it is surely the representative value of the one case well studied as against the superficial survey of many.

Dr. Bopegamage refers to two such studies which he made in Delhi and we may hope that he has more material from these for future publication. In the first study he compared two housing areas with the intention of assessing the degree of "neighbourliness" in each.[25] In the few pages devoted to this comparison many more factors than mere distribution, proximity and communication emerge. It seems, indeed, a little perverse that so much stress should be laid on these in his account when more obvious ones are present. The less "neighbourly" area although predominantly Hindu is divided by sect, language and caste; the population is

[24] *Op. cit.*, p. 202.
[25] *Ibid.*, p. 93-103.

composed of immigrants who came to Delhi within the decade ending 1951. The "neighbourly" area is a Christian colony (the author does not mention precise sect differences), the language is common and the population is descended from immigrants two generations back. If the more friendly relations subsisting between people in the latter group derive from the fact that they meet frequently and are, by the arrangement of their doors, obliged to meet, is it then argued that the same physical disposition would improve the social relations of the Hindu colony? Might it not exacerbate the present aloofness into downright quarrelling? In the suburbs of London one may observe the alterations made to precisely similar houses by different classes; often one finds that front and back gardens, where they exist, are only formally divided by a low fence, hedge or stretch of wire netting; elsewhere people have gone to some lengths to raise the barrier which at once ensures their privacy and cuts down contact with their neighbours—even where there is no ground for ill-feeling between them—and it is amusing to see how, with the assistance of wires or wooden trellis work, neighbours will train roses or even runner-beans between backdoors that overlook each other. Another level of English society, given the same architectural arrangements, resorts to more subtle methods while overtly scorning the "bourgeois" concern for privacy. The point is, surely, that the study of ecology is the study of a *relation* between the society and its habitat and not simply the adaptation or reaction to physical circumstances of the human animal. To conclude with a final example, Dr. Bopegamage asserts that the "*cul-de-sac* form of housing lay-out is more suitable for Old Delhi because many of the people living in Old Delhi for generations have got used to . . . such form of residential areas".[26] He adds that this form of housing arrangement is also to be desired since it keeps the houses away from the main road and traffic circulation. But why have people in Old Delhi and in so many other cites at least in North India, "got used to" this arrangement if not because it was and still is in many places an exclusive caste or kinship arrangement of houses of which the original is still to be seen in the villages? It would have been interesting to be told to what extent this is true in Old Delhi and to hear whether the same pressures are exerted upon a house-seller

[26] *Op. cit.*, p. 203.

to keep the house inside the caste and whether the interloper is cold-shouldered there as he is in similar culs-de-sac elsewhere.

The second of Dr. Bopegamage's local studies in the city was of a Camar "village" which had been absorbed by the spread of the residential area. Once again only a very few pages are devoted to this[27] and yet here again one begins to see Delhi as an Indian city presenting its own problems. Dr. Bopegamage suggests that the position of the Camar in the eyes of higher castes has given them a sense of group consciousness which, he implies, is not met elsewhere. Is this generalizable? Is it for instance another factor to be taken into account in comparing a Christian (hence low-caste?) neighbourhood with a relatively high-caste Hindu neighbourhood? Again we are told that young Camars prefer to patronize modern hairdressing saloons instead of the traditional Nai. Is there any sense of "passing" here such as is reported from non-white areas in the Southern States of America? It would be interesting to know if the Untouchable whether born in the city or village consciously exploits the anonymity of the city and in what way. These disappointingly few pages nevertheless demonstrate what could be done by the individual research worker which would be of strictly sociological value and at the same time not deducible from Census reports and city guides.

In closing this section I would note how thoroughly misleading is the premature comparison which Dr. Bopegamage suggests between this Camar "village" with the Ghetto (he speaks of it as an Indian Ghetto), Little Sicily or China Town. The Camar are precisely not foreign immigrants unable or unwilling to adapt themselves to an alien culture and it is to falsify the situation to speak of them as though they were.

III

If in considering studies in urban sociology we are concerned to discover how the individual sociologist can make a valuable contribution to our understanding of Indian society as a whole the same is not immediately true as regards what is known as rural sociology. There the individual has already made some contribution and the

[27] *Op. cit.*, p. 103-109.

problems of field work and the need for it are fairly well recognized. Except in the sense that I shall shortly consider I do not see that the research of the rural sociologist differs in any way from that of the social anthropologist. In the excerpts included in the revised edition of his earlier work, *Introduction to Rural Sociology* published in 1953, Dr. A. R. Desai seems to recognize this, for he draws substantially upon published anthropological studies.[28]

The work now under review contains the whole of the earlier work and is supplemented by excerpts from the works of others. In addition to lengthy quotations from articles in *Village India* and *India's Villages*, Daniel Thorner's *The Agrarian Prospect in India* is well represented. Some ten pages are cited from the *Report of the All-India Rural Credit Survey* and there is an interesting section on the Bhoodan and Gramdan movements made up of selections from the writings of five authors including Acharya Vinoba Bhave himself. A word must be said about the general editing of the excerpts. In very few cases is the fact of selection clear and since the book is primarily of value to those who have not seen the originals it is unfortunate that there is nothing to indicate where the present text diverges from them. Further, I cannot agree with the editor in his cutting for, where I have the original texts to hand, it seems that the concrete has been sacrificed to the general and precise information has been made to give way to the discussion of tendencies—discussions which, taken out of their contexts, tell us little. It is perhaps a pity that Dr. Desai in his laudable ambition to produce a comprehensive reader for the student has succumbed to the understandable temptation to include too much. He has preferred in many cases the comprehensive coverage of authors to the comprehensive coverage of facts.

Dr. Desai's understanding of sociology is not precisely ours. If we cannot see our way to agreeing with him in his moral assumptions it is not, as we have already said, because we think the sociologist should be indifferent to moral issues. But there is a difference between a moral assumption and an informed moral judgement and if sociology has a moral end it is to reform thought for the sake of action and not the reverse. And this more discreet policy would seem to justify itself by its results. Dr. Desai, taking cognisance of the fact that some sociologists have doubted the value of the

[28] *Rural Sociology in India*, Bombay, 1959.

categories used by the 1951 Census Authorities in the matter of the joint family, goes on to say:

> it is admitted by all that the traditional joint family is disintegrating and is creating varied types of family structures which have lost their old vitality and functions and which have still not crystallized themselves into healthy nuclear family types.[29]

There is no reference to fact here; change is universally admitted but not the disintegration of the kind implied. Why are nuclear families more healthy and in what way?

Rural Sociology, as I understand the term, is the study of the country's rural population in the mass, it is concerned to answer the large and important questions confronting the country at large as they effect that population. It relies necessarily upon statistics and is interested in the minutiae of social life only as they are instances of general trends. It is obviously of value to government officials and sociologists alike that there be, especially in India, such a discipline which takes as its special task the assessment and generalization of localized reports so that society has at any particular moment a general picture of itself. But such a discipline cannot be so independent of these local reports as appears not from the excerpts reproduced in Dr. Desai's book but from the contribution of the editor. Nor, I think, should the word "rural" anymore than the word "urban" be used in such a manner as to suggest quite distinct kinds of fact as in the phrases "rural religion", "rural family" or even "rural people". That this is not an unreal danger emerges strongly from Dr. Desai's discussion of the first topic. "First" he says "it has been observed by sociologists all over the world that the rural people have a greater disposition to religion than the urban people have . . . Secondly, the religious outlook of the rural people overwhelmingly dominates their intellectual, emotional and practical life . . . Thirdly, in societies based on subsistance economies, the leadership of the village life in all domains was provided by the priestly group, in India the Brahmins."[30] The accumulated evidence of nearly forty years of anthropological field-work conducted amongst peoples more unambiguously "rural" than the Indian peasant and in India itself might surely have been allowed to qualify these generalizations?

[29] *Op. cit.*, p. 123.
[30] *Ibid.*, p. 59.

Our readers will have recognized the influences behind the use made here of the term "rural". The assumed dichotomy of village and city, of peasant and city dweller has assumed so high a degree of academic respectability that even those who would criticize or modify it have not thought it necessary to question radically the assumptions on which it rests. First of all it should be clear that the enormous difference between the architectural or physical facts does not argue a difference in the type of society. The city is an *Indian* city and the village an *Indian* village and in this article I have tried to suggest a manner in which these differences of habitation can be transcended. I would suggest in closing the possible grounds for the existence of the "rural-urban continuum problem". First of all as I have said already at the outset: we tend too often to confuse what in analysis should be distinguished, the traditional city and the city as vehicle of alien, western or modern influences. New Delhi and Old are recognizably distinct but it is for the sociologist to distinguish for example between new and old Bombay. Where the town or city is not indigenous this does not impose itself, there we are studying the relations between two societies. But where it is recognized that city and village are elements of the same civilization how does the question of their continuity arise? Is it not because the sociologist has assumed (almost unconsciously) a division which his later observations would lead him to mend? If we have posited the village from the outset we have automatically opposed it in our minds to the city. When we come to knit up what we have broken we can only do it by way of a description of the relationships between the two entities. Small wonder if we get no further in this enterprise than the description of the movement of culture traits between one and the other. That the problem is a false one becomes clear when, moving to the level of relations, the dichotomy disappears.

Between this view of sociology in India and that which would attempt the comparison of city with city and peasant society with peasant society there does seem to be a choice. It would appear impossible to recognize the "orthogenetic" character of India's cities and villages and at the same time to think of comparing them separately with their "equivalents" elsewhere. The sociology of India's urban and rural population may not be divided between urban and rural sociologies.

CORRESPONDENCE

FOR A SOCIOLOGY OF INDIA

A Rejoinder to Dr. Bailey

In starting *Contributions to Indian Sociology* we did not intend to open a "forum for theoretical discussion", we felt that we could not afford that luxury. Comparing the situation of social anthropologists working in India with that of our African colleagues we thought that while they had built up a certain body of common assumptions, a certain terminology, a common approach, we in India were in danger of slipping off into the most hopeless condition of atomization in which each writer elaborated his own theories, politely ignored anything which anyone else had said and, while benefiting from the work of Africanist colleagues, allowed to go by default the contribution which studies in India can make to the general discipline of social anthropology. We were impelled by a sense of urgency to initiate a discussion of the facts, to offer, by way of a beginning, a view of the facts as they are available in the present condition of our knowledge, so that our colleagues might feel stimulated to agree or to bring us to agreement through initial disagreement or modification of our views. Whether we disagreed or agreed we felt that there should at least be a common language in which to do so and that the alternative was an increasing isolation of each writer leading finally to a total breakdown of communication. After reading Dr. Bailey's criticism of our first number[1] we are willing to confess that we have perhaps failed in our task of communicating; something in our manner has riled him and if he has caught his polemical style from us as he claims, we propose

[1] Published in *Contributions*, No. III, p. 88-101. The critique bore on *Contributions*, No. I, mainly p. 7-41. The references here are to both texts.

to take the greatest precautions in the future to control the virus. The views which we deliberately but not dogmatically offered (to invoke the distinction of Dr. Johnson) were, and are intended to make for more precision in the field in which we are concerned. In short we plead guilty to the lesser charge of justifiable acerbity but, since we have arrogated nothing, cannot see our way to accepting the charge of arrogance.

We were interested to hear that Dr. Bailey had expressed some criticisms of our first number and we invited him to give his opinion at some length; although pressed for time, he agreed. In the circumstances, therefore, it would be more than merely cantankerous to express disappointment with his critique. In the following pages, therefore, we shall try to limit ourselves to genuine disagreements of a fundamental nature. We think that sometimes Dr. Bailey has caricatured our position by preferring the letter to the spirit and by partial quotation but we cannot afford the space to take up such points in detail and we leave it to our readers to compare the offending text with our critic's representation.

Certainly the disagreement between us is fundamental and we are glad to have the opportunity to bring it to the light. For the sake of economy we shall take the, admittedly risky, step of summarizing Dr. Bailey's position as a sociologist as it emerges from his discussion in order to define the area of disagreement. At the outset there is what appears to be an insuperable barrier: for Dr. Bailey sociology is a science applying itself to India, the sociology of India is not different in its methods and interests from the sociology of any other area. The human activity there observable provides the raw material from which, employing the concepts of general sociology, he will make abstractions in order, finally, to "find out what, in the particular society in India he happens to be studying and which he has limited on a criterion of interaction, is also found in other societies." (III, 97) He is not interested in the unique which is "scientifically incomprehensible."

As opposed to this we expressed our grounding in social anthropology which, as we understand it, has always attempted to break down pre-established concepts by submitting them to the experience of social life in, by definition, different or unique societies. For us social facts are not only things but things and representations at the same time (I, 11). This means that we cannot see our way to abstract directly from behaviour nor "evade the ideas of the

people" (III, 90) that we study. For we look at our data from without (as a natural scientist does) and from within (a position having no equivalent in the natural sciences). To take a well known case, our concept of a political system is modified by our experience of the behaviour and ideas of the Nuer as Evans-Pritchard presents them to us. To make a more general statement we would instance Nadel, whom Dr. Bailey quotes, and Max Weber in our support but we have to hand the concise statement of J. H. M. Beattie opposing any view that social relations or interaction on the one hand and values on the other, are poles apart:

> social relations cannot be intelligibly conceived or described apart from the expectations, intentions and ideas which they express or imply; certainly no social anthropologist has ever attempted so to describe them. Behaviour can have no social significance apart from what it means to somebody, and unless such meanings are taken into account nothing remotely resembling sociological understanding is possible[2].

It is on these grounds that we feel obliged to take into account the religious ideas that people entertain and to modify our concepts accordingly so that something like a true picture of what actually happens will emerge. Dr. Bailey has misunderstood our use of the phrase "Indian sociology" if he imagines that, given half a chance, we would also offer an "Indian chemistry". And since chemistry has been mentioned we might ask whether his "personal interests" allow a chemist to disregard some of the properties of a chemical body. By analogy, if the people we study have a theory —the caste system—which takes account of political and economic facts and relegates them to a secondary position, are we justified in assuming that these factors play the same role in that society that they play in ours, and in dismissing the religious framework as an epiphenomenon suitable for culturologists? Is it not reasonable, on the contrary, to start with the assumption, regarding these "factors" that they are likely to be significantly altered in comparison with what we know, or suppose, them to be in our own society? If this is not so we may fairly wonder what point there is in looking for "what India has in common with other societies" since the conclusion is given in the postulate.

[2] J. M. H. Beattie, "Understanding and Explanation in Social Anthropology", *The British Journal of Sociology*, X, 1, March 1959 (p. 45-60), p. 47.

We turn next to the possibility of making abstractions from "raw material" (89-90). Here we have certainly been misunderstood and misrepresented. Dr. Bailey denies that his "only task is to make sense of the 'flagrant contradictions in popular thought' by abstracting out consistent elements" and so withdraws from a task that we never proposed. We mentioned "flagrant contradictions" in a descriptive context (I, 12) and never suggested that anything be "abstracted out" of them. We said that the sociologist's "understanding consists in replacing the simple in the complex . . .". But Dr. Bailey's insertion of "abstraction" serves his own purposes. In the same page there is a paragraph to the effect that "abstraction" is necessarily poorer than the concrete and therefore cannot claim, in our phrase, to "describe phenomena in all their diversity". Who could possibly disagree with so sensible an observation? However we must note that our critic has in his use of the word abstraction seriously distorted our position: we had spoken of substituting the consideration of relations for that of individual beings: "it is" he says "another way of saying that by a process of abstraction we make a system". Unfortunately it is not "another way of saying" as a quotation of the whole passage to which he refers will show. We have reintroduced in italics those parts of our argument omitted or "abstracted" by him.

(by considering relations instead of individual beings) the sort of nightmare of perpetual diversity which haunts the naive observer is banished . . . *Let us here recall the decisive advantages of a localized study: everything is confused if one collects together as in the columns of a dictionary the data from different places and times because* we have not to do with things but with structural facts: *they do not exist in themselves but only in relation to others, in a particular place and for particular people.* Only this view allows us to describe the phenomena in all their diversity without adding to or subtracting from them (I, 13-14).

The first thing to be noted is the change of level introduced by the words "Let us . . ." (3rd line): a plea for monographic study follows a general consideration, so that in the end "this view" refers to a structural view within a monographic framework and not, as in the abridged quotation of Dr. Bailey, to the general consideration which preceded. The important point is, however, contained in the statement that the facts "do not exist in themselves but only in relation to others". If this is so then "abstraction" lies not in

taking a relational or structural view but in reducing the data to individual elements, a reduction which corresponds suitably with Dr. Bailey's empiricism. It would have been preferable if Dr. Bailey had argued the position in these terms rather than foisting off on us an argument that is not ours. For it becomes increasingly clear that he is not "interested" in the idea of structure except perhaps as a blanket word, and since this idea is at the core of our attempt it is no wonder that he could not or would not understand us (see his repeated indifference as to whether elements or relations are considered p. 98, 99). He finds it enough to think that a system is more "abstract" than an individual fact, while, in our view, social anthropology tries to account for each isolated trait by the system of which it is a part (I, 11). Evidently we understand "system" and " structure" in quite different senses. It is then not surprising that for him "abstraction" is an easy process which does not seem to pose any problem: the ideas of the people can be "evaded", any mode of thinking can be applied (our p. 14), expressions like "economic and political system" are not in the least "question-begging" and the critique can end, in unmitigated seriousness, with the ominous words: "complexity is not to be conjured away by question-begging denials of 'sociological reality' ".

We come finally to the question of comparison. Dr. Bailey suggests that our position precludes it. First of all let us point out that in our text we referred at several points to comparison between Indian and non-Indian phenomena: we have the general statement concerning the constitution of "an adequate idea of mankind" (I, 9); the contribution of Indian studies to general (descriptive) sociology (p. 10); comparison implied in the monographic description (p. 12); the superficial comparison of East and West (p. 14); the comparison with primitives (p. 16); the comparison of sanyasi's and western thought (p. 17); the consideration of inequality and equality, the place of the individual, etc.

The fact of the matter is that we are more ambitious in our view of a comparative sociology than Dr. Bailey. A comparison based on Indian material but which leaves out all that is distinctively Indian, that is concerned with similarities only and not, for some reason, with differences, is a comparison hopping on one leg. Nor is this a matter of divergent "interests", for comparison is the common aim and we expect more of a comparative sociology than generalizations about social mobility, social stratification and the

like.[3] We do not expect to be informed that the Indians or Hindus are men *although* they have some religious ideas. We aim rather at a comparison between this type of society, including caste and Hinduism, and other types. In the one kind of comparison the conscious aspects of social life are epiphenomena which once put aside reveal that men are all the same or that the same processes are found in all societies. In the other which we advocate, consciousness is an essential part of social life (although by no means the whole of it) and to do away with consciousness is to do away with sociology in our sense, a sense which, as Max Weber said, "there is no intention of attempting to impose on anyone else."[4] If we take the instance offered by Dr. Bailey we are obliged to confess that we are not overly impressed. He writes: "A definition of caste which rules out comparison with, for instance, the Southern States of America or even with South Africa, is useless for comparative sociology." (p. 97) This accords with his interest in finding out "what . . . in the society . . . he is studying . . . is also found in other societies." Not, we note, in other *Indian* societies. Dr. Bailey

[3] B. K. Sarkar in *The Positive Background of Hindu Sociology* complimented Sorokin for his contribution to the "new indology" in showing that the processes of social mobility were the same in India as elsewhere. "The processes involved in this group mobility as manifest in the ascendency of the Brahmanical aristocracy are considered by him [Sorokin] to be identical with those that led to the gradual rise of the Christian Bishop, Clergy and the Church as a whole after Constantine. The rise and fall of the French legists as well as of the bourgeoisie and the royal aristocracies in Russia, Germany and Austria, nay, the elevation of the Russian communists after 1918 to the place occupied by the Czarist aristocracy, all embody the principles underlying the growth of what may be called the Hindu Brahmanocracy" (Sarkar, *op. cit.*, 1937, p. 30). In contrast with this, the conclusion of a serious study on social stratification may be quoted: "The theory of stratification is not an independant body of concepts and generalizations which are only loosely connected with other parts of a general sociological theory, it *is* general sociological theory pulled together with reference to a certain fundamental aspect of social systems". (Talcott Parsons, in R. Bendix and S. M. Lipset, *Class, Status and Power, A Reader in Social Stratification*, Glencoe, Ill., Free Press, 1953, p. 128). In other terms, "stratification" is a particular mode of analysis of a whole social system. It is not an "element" or "factor" which would be common to different societies as "social mobility" in the passage quoted from Sarkar.

[4] "Processes and uniformities which it has here seemed convenient not to designate as sociological phenomena or uniformities because they are not 'understandable' are naturally not on that account any the less important . . . even for sociology in the present sense which restricts it to subjectively understandable phenomena—a usage which there is no intention of attempting to impose on anyone else. Such phenomena, however important, are simply treated by a different method from the others, they become conditions, stimuli, furthering or hindering circumstances of action." (Max Weber, *Theory of Social and Economic Organisation*, tr. Henderson and T. Parsons, Glencoe, Ill., Free Press, c. 1947, p. 100).

is not "interested" in these and such a comparison would be mere culturology. We will not embarrass him by pressing the point further, we ourselves find traditional Indian society sufficiently "one" for us to think it reasonable to make comparisons within it and then to make comparisons with the outside.

In order not to close on too negative a note, let us consider Dr. Bailey's main consideration, the village, where we can immediately grant him that in fact people do in some contexts refer under the name of a village to its population as a whole and not only their caste fellows in that village. Here we exaggerated for the sake of emphasis and unnecessarily, for it is sufficient that the alternative is often true. Now, that "village solidarity" is to a large extent woven round the dominant caste is practically admitted by our critic. But unfortunately he once more replaces our position by a fictional one, as when he makes us say "the village is subsumed in kinship and caste"; how could then our secondary factor have existed at all? And in the matter of primary and secondary factors does he not sum up our position when he unexceptionably asks whether we can adequately "deal with the fact that it is not the dominant caste as such which controls the village, but that section of the caste which is located in (the particular) village" (p. 95). For surely there must be a caste and a system of caste relations, i.e. the caste system (primary factor) before the "section" of the caste residing in a particular territory (secondary factor) can be distinguished? The village itself does not give us the principle of control, it is the caste organization, once *qualified* by residence, which delivers it. It would seem then that Dr. Bailey must agree with our statement:

> A temporary conclusion . . . is that the territorial factor, the relation to the soil, is not, in India as a whole, one of the primary factors in social organization. It is a secondary factor in relation to the two fundamental factors of kinship and caste. *It certainly qualifies them, but does not replace or dominate them* (I, 18). (Our italics. Is it not disingenuous in our critic to pretend that "secondary" in this passage might mean "later developed"?) (III, 96).

To put it in the simplest terms, what did we say about the village? We said that a common-sense European idea of "the village" has misled previous writers and scholars dealing with rural India and that even the appearance of professional social anthropologists had not entirely broken the spell. We suggested that a village

in a caste society has proved to be not exactly the same thing as a village in another type of society. The grounds of Dr. Bailey's objection to this seem to us to be in the last analysis based upon a dogmatic belief that "economic and political interests" constitute the core of social life and are in some special sense more "real". We keep our minds open, and final decisions must wait upon the increase of properly collected material expounded without bias. Experience must finally dominate as it should, and it will be seen from an article by Dr. Bailey to be published in our next number that, despite his "truly fundamental choice" he shares certain preoccupations with us.

The Editors.

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in preparation

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